

# JEMF QUARTERLY

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Dinah's Wedding Day, from the Opera of Leonora .....	Company
Come with me, my Dinah dear.....	E. P. Christy
Stop that knocking, introduced with Happy and Light, from the Bohemian Girl ..	Company
Julius's Bride.....	George Christy
Rosa Lee, or don't be foolish Joe.....	E. P. Christy
Pyroclean Solo, displaying a flexibility and volume of voice truly astonishing and hitherto unknown.....	Christians
Phantom Chorus, or the Darkey's Apparition, from La Sonnambula .....	Company
Masquerade Waltz, with Street Organ and Automaton Imitations .....	Company

## THE JEMF

The John Edwards Memorial Foundation is an archive and research center located in the Folklore and Mythology Center of the University of California at Los Angeles. It is chartered as an educational non-profit corporation, supported by gifts and contributions.

The purpose of the JEMF is to further the serious study and public recognition of those forms of American traditional music disseminated by commercial media such as print, sound recordings, films, radio, and television. These forms include the music referred to as *cowboy, western, country & western, old time, hillbilly, bluegrass, mountain, country, cajun, sacred, gospel, race, blues, rhythm & blues, soul, folk rock, and ethnic-American*.

The Foundation works toward this goal by:

gathering and cataloguing phonograph records, sheet music, song books, photographs, biographical and discographical information, and scholarly works, as well as related artifacts;

compiling, publishing and distributing bibliographical, discographical, and historical data;

reprinting, with permission, pertinent articles originally appearing in books and journals;

and reissuing historically significant out-of-print sound recordings.

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The *JEMF Quarterly* is edited by Linda L. Painter. Manuscripts that fall within the area of the JEMF's activities and goals (described on the inside front cover) are invited, but should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped return envelope. Address all manuscripts, books, and records for review, and other communications to: Editor, *JEMFQ*, John Edwards Memorial Foundation, at the Folklore & Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

## LETTERS

Dear Editor:

A few comments are in order, I believe, regarding Cary Ginell's critique of the Okeh *Western Swing* collection (No. 64; Winter 1981).

First, I found it somewhat incredible that in his opening chronicle of the development of western swing reissues that he ignored the contributions of Tishomingo Records of Pasadena, California. Though the label was short-lived (1976-1977) they produced one fine compendium of pre-War and post-War material (*Rollin' Along*, TSHO-2220) and a superb sampler of the Bob Wills Tiffany Transcriptions (TSHO-BW01). Legal problems with the latter seemed to end the label around 1977.

Second, I must admit that I, too, was appalled by the inaccuracies in the notes of the Okeh collection and felt Mr. Ginell was entirely correct in documenting them. As I provided the discographical information for the Hank Penny cut correctly, the misspelling of Carl Stewart's name was inexcusable. Yet I was bothered by Mr. Ginell's catty, almost petulant tone here. It almost seemed to reflect jealousy that he himself was not consulted.

Third and most important. As one who has raked others over the coals for inaccuracy on numerous occasions over the years there's one thing I learned early on: if you're going to indict someone for misstating the facts, *don't dare* be guilty yourself. Mr. Ginell's erroneous description of the legendary steel guitarist Earl "Joaquin" Murphey as Sapde Cooley's "accordionist" and his misspelling of Murphey's surname undercuts his own credibility severely, if not fatally.

--Rich Kienzle  
Greensburg, PA

Dear Editor:

Please accept my thanks for the fine article on "The Rise and Decline of Standard Radio Transcription Company"--just one more piece of American history passing by, all too quickly to be forgotten except for the caring and sharing of people like you.

--Julian Aiken  
East Point, GA



JIMMY WAKELY (1914-1982)

Veteran country and western music performer and composer Jimmy Wakely passed away from heart complications on 23 September 1982, in Mission Hills, California. From his start in Oklahoma City, he was long closely associated with Johnny Bond, Scotty Harrel, and Dick Rinehart. Taking seriously an off-hand suggestion by Gene Autry that the fellows should make their way to Hollywood, they eventually became associated with the Autry radio program as the Jimmy Wakely Trio. Jim in due course became a very popular recording and radio artist, while starring in several western movies.

It should be noted that in the late forties and early fifties, Jimmy was well received in the fields of country, western, and popular music. It is believed that he was the first C&W artist to appear on the Las Vegas strip. His pop-oriented recordings, particularly those in the late forties with Margaret Whiting, appear to earn Jim the title of the first crossover C&W artist. On one pop music chart he was ranked third, behind Perry Como and Frankie Laine, and ahead of such artists as Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Not too bad for a country boy, born in an Arkansas log cabin.

Jimmy will be sorely missed by his many friends and fans.

--Ken Griffis  
North Hollywood, CA



Hank Penny in the early 1940s.

## HANK PENNY: THE ORIGINAL "OUTLAW"?

By Ken Griffis

*[Over the years country music historian Ken Griffis has interviewed many performers. Recently, he visited Hank Penny and recorded their conversation, which contains Penny's recollections as a country music artist. The following excerpt from their recorded conversation is followed by a discography by Rich Kienzle--Ed.]*

For almost thirty years Hank Penny was a prominent country-western artist. Born in 1918 in Birmingham, Alabama, Penny started his career in the music business in early 1936 as a member of "Hal Burns and His Tune Wranglers." Then in 1938 Penny met musicians Sheldon Bennett and Louis Dumont in New Orleans, and along with them and Carl Stewart and Sammy Forsmark formed "The Radio Cowboys." After a brief stay in Chattanooga, the group went to Atlanta, Georgia, and beginning on 18 September 1938 (Penny's birthday), became regulars on radio station WSB, featuring a swinging, string sound that was well respected by their peers. From Atlanta, Penny moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he formed another popular group "The Plantation Boys." In 1945 Hank Penny decided to move to the West Coast, and established himself as a top vocalist, rhythm guitarist, and comic with his own band, and later as a member of the Spade Cooley and Dude Martin organizations. During this time Penny opened what is now one of the most popular country music night clubs in Southern California, the Palomino, in North Hollywood.

GRIFFIS: Your comment that you have reached a point in life where you have made peace with yourself is a bit of a contrast with the Hank Penny of the past.

PENNY: Yes it is. But I guess I have come to realize that despite my own personal preferences, things are what they are, and there's no future in fighting events over which you have no control. If I could, for instance, I would change what Nashville has done to our music. Also, I would have been a little more understanding of other people's weaknesses. Let me give you an example. There was a very talented musician in the forties and fifties, with whom I worked on occasion. He had a drinking problem and didn't always meet his responsibilities to his fans and the

people who booked him. I didn't understand, then, how an artist could miss dates and disappoint the fans, and I had no use for him. If I could do it over, I would tell him that while I could not condone his actions, I'd try to be more understanding and be his friend. I guess what I'm saying, Ken, is that perhaps I didn't have the necessary maturity, then, to cope with such problems.

GRIFFIS: Well, that's reflective of some of the issues you faced in your early career. You had your own code, Hank, for better or worse. But you did, I believe, what you thought was right--but what was not necessarily best for your career, such as the disagreement you had with the Grand Ole Opry and Foreman Phillips. Those decisions didn't enhance your career.

PENNY: No doubt about that. But, as you say, at the time it appeared to be the right thing to do. When the Opry told me that they would add our Radio Cowboys to their stable if Noel Boggs would drop the steel guitar and play dobro--that infringed on our rights and our integrity as free musicians to create and grow. I remember after my talk with the Opry management--that was around 1938-1939--that I called our fellows together to talk it over. What a fantastic group we had--Louis Dumont on banjo; Carl Stewart, bass; Noel Boggs, steel; Sheldon Bennett and Boudreau Bryant on twin fiddles. We swung like a garden gate, we were a real heavy-weight group. I told them the Opry was making a choice between us and Roy Acuff's band. We considered Acuff too hillbilly for our tastes. I went back to the Opry management and told them

that since Acuff already had a dobro guitar, they should hire him. We weren't interested in making a change. Not smart, perhaps, but we felt it was best for us.

GRIFFIS: The same went for Foreman Phillips?

PENNY: Correct. We had a fine group around 1945, working for Burt Phillips at the old Venice Ballroom. Burt couldn't tolerate the free spirit of our music and he told me that I had to fire Noel Boggs, Jimmy Wyble, and Harold Hensley--because they were, in effect, too good. They wouldn't stick to the melody, and Phillips hated instrumental breaks of any kind. That I couldn't understand, as he had hired me on the strength of our Columbia record sounds. We told him we could not accept his decision, and walked out. Again, not too smart, but we felt we had no other way to go.

GRIFFIS: Hank, have you ever thought that you may have been the original "outlaw"? You may have been thirty years ahead of your time.

PENNY: Could be, Ken, could be. But you must understand that I never started out to be rebellious, but at times it just worked out that way. From the beginning, I just wanted my band to have a sound of its own. In those days, too many groups simply followed the Nashville sound--much like today. We didn't mind sounding a little like Milton Brown or Bob Wills. We just didn't want a Nashville sound.

GRIFFIS: Well, didn't your first quality band in Atlanta sound like some other band?

PENNY: Oh, yes. We tried to some degree to emulate the Milton Brown group, but not exactly like them. We wanted to do our thing as much as possible. We were greatly impressed with Milton's sound and, of course, Bob Wills.

GRIFFIS: I can hear a little of the Milton Brown influence, and for that matter, the 1935-36 Wills sound too.

PENNY: That's right, Ken. Of course, more than anything, we were showing our disdain for the Grand Ole Opry, which we considered too hillbilly for us. We weren't about to allow them to place their narrow-minded restraints on us.

GRIFFIS: That's understandable. I think back to the Bob Wills-Grand Ole Opry disagreement over the first use of drums on the Opry. They insisted that Wills hide the drums behind a curtain, but according to Rich Kienzle's research, Bob refused and put the drums right up front and Uncle Dave Macon nearly blew his mind.

PENNY:

That's great. I'm sure you agree that Wills was one of the most influential band leaders of the thirties and forties. We all loved him. We actually considered our Atlanta band a Texas fiddle band, and we copied Bob's sound as much as we dared. And to be able to record on the same label with the "King" was a great treat for our group. You may have heard how we got to record for Columbia. It's a funny story. We wanted to record so badly that we went into a small recording studio in Atlanta and made a demo to be sent to Columbia for consideration. When I returned to our car, which had our name on it, "Hank Penny and the Radio Cowboys," I found a white-haired gentleman standing there who asked if I might tell him where he could find Hank Penny. I told him that I was Hank Penny, and in a crisp British accent he went on to explain that he was Arthur Satherley, head A&R man for Columbia Records. So I said, "Glad to meet you, here's your mail," and handed him the demo.

GRIFFIS: Unbelievable!

PENNY: Yes, that was a real kick.

GRIFFIS: Were you pleased with your Columbia recordings as a whole?

PENNY: Not really. In those days the instruments left a lot to be desired and you got no help from the company nor the engineers. If you didn't have it, you were in trouble. No one ever offered you any help with your recordings. But every group faced the same problem.

GRIFFIS: What broke up your Atlanta band?

PENNY: Well, the war came along and it just became very difficult to keep any kind of quality band together.

GRIFFIS: What took you to Cincinnati?

PENNY: Well, that wasn't my first choice. To tell you the truth I really wanted to go to Chicago first of all, just to see a fellow that I was so greatly impressed with, Curt Massey, who was with the Westerners. Man, what a talent. I thought he was the best around at that time.

GRIFFIS: I know what you mean, Hank. He was a super talent for so many years. I had the pleasure of interviewing Curt and visiting with his charming wife, Edythe. What nice people. Did you enjoy your time in Cincinnati?

PENNY:

Oh yes. It was a delightful time, associating with the likes of Merle Travis, Grandpa Jones, the Delmore Brothers, Captain Stubby and the Buccaneers, Joe Maphis, and Ruby and Curley Fox. An

outstanding group of musicians. Travis was so great and I was proud to have him as a friend.

GRIFFIS: Without question, Travis was and is a legend in his own time. How long were you in Cincinnati?

PENNY: About three years.

GRIFFIS: You made your first King recordings during this period as I recall.

PENNY: That's right. But, we had to be careful to begin with. As a staff member of WLW, you weren't supposed to make recordings.

GRIFFIS: Why was that?

PENNY: They felt they paid you enough that you shouldn't have to make records. And, too, they were concerned that you might get too popular and move on.

GRIFFIS: You said that they paid you enough--how much was that?

PENNY: I think I was making about \$200 a week, which was good money during the war. And, too, we made personal appearances and we made pretty fair money from them. So we weren't doing too badly.

GRIFFIS: Tell me about those early King recording sessions.

PENNY: Well, you would have had to have known the owner of King, Syd Nathan, to have appreciated what that era was like. Syd was one of the real characters that I ever knew. He was the kind that you either loved or you wanted to kill. Most of the time I just tried to tolerate him as best I could.

GRIFFIS: Why was that?

PENNY: Well, Syd was a gruff, overbearing type of individual who learned to whisper in a sawmill. He carried his operation around in his pockets. He always had his pockets stuffed with notes. Most of the time he would drive you up the wall just talking with him. You have to give him credit, though--he made the company go just on his own efforts.

GRIFFIS: He must have been a real character.

PENNY: Oh, he was that. He was an opportunist. He recorded a lot of blacks. They didn't care what happened to their music, they just wanted to record. People came from miles around at their own expense to record. Syd paid these people little or nothing. People would come up to Syd on the street and hand him a pre-recorded session.

GRIFFIS: Did you find it difficult working with Syd?

PENNY: Most of the time. He always wanted to

be involved in everything that was taking place. I vividly remember one session where he kept coming into the studio from the control booth, telling my people how he thought the tune should be played. Finally, I cornered Syd and told him to keep out of the studio; that the musicians worked for me, and if he had a complaint to take it up with me. After the session, I was so mad that I just threw my guitar in the case and stormed out of the studio. Later, Syd came up to me and said, "Damn, Hank, I just love it when you get mad." One of the tunes that we cut that day had its name changed by Syd. He called it "Penny Blows His Top."

GRIFFIS: He really sounds like one of a kind.

PENNY: He was that. I'll give you an example of what made Syd tick. I remember during one of our sessions, Syd and Sylvester Cross of American Music were engaged in a bitter discussion over the difference of 1/8th-of-a-cent royalty. Man, you never heard such language over such an actual small amount. But, boy, they went after it like you wouldn't believe. After the session, we all went over to one of the best night spots to eat. The tab was pretty sizeable and before anyone could reach for it, Syd picked it up. I asked him how he could fight so hard over an 1/8th-of-a-cent and then pick up a big tab. Syd just laughed and said, "This morning I was a kyke, tonight I'm an elegant Jew." That was Syd in a nutshell.

GRIFFIS: Were the recording companies interested in quality recordings?

PENNY: No, not really. If there was a cheaper way to do it, that's the way it would be done. As a matter of fact, Ken, one of my pet peeves is that the companies offered little help to the artists. It seems that the primary interest of all the companies was "Let's get this session over as fast as possible and to heck with the quality." It seems that saving money was their primary concern.

GRIFFIS: When did you leave Cincinnati?

PENNY: The first time was in early 1945. I came to the West Coast on vacation. I looked up my old buddy, Merle Travis, who took me down to the Sunset Rancho to see Spade Cooley. I had wanted very much to see the band after hearing their transcriptions.

GRIFFIS: Where was the Sunset Rancho located?

PENNY: At 6000 Sunset Blvd., in Hollywood. It apparently didn't last too long, but we went there to see the Cooley band, and

man, I mean they were something else. I had never seen or heard any other group do what they did with that great fiddle section, playing from written arrangements.

GRIFFIS: Hank, it should be noted that you have always been free with your praise of the talents of other artists. Whether it be Spade Cooley, Bob Wills, or the Sons of the Pioneers, it is to your credit that you very readily appreciate the musicianship of others. That's not too common a trait of many artists.

PENNY: Well, thank you Ken. I appreciate your saying that.

GRIFFIS: So, then you moved to California for good. What did you do?

PENNY: In a very short time I put together the group for Burt Phillips at one of his Barn Dance locations in Venice. After Phillips and I came to a parting of the ways, I had a group at Hoot Gibson's Painted Post on Ventura Blvd. in the Valley. I was there when Bobbi Bennett got me a job working in a Charles Starrett movie. I believe I made four Starrett movies. A little later Bobbi assisted me in becoming associated with the Spade Cooley organization. I really enjoyed working with Spade. I know some people don't and didn't care for Spade, but he treated me fairly and I truly liked the guy. When I was the comic on his very popular TV program, he readily allowed me to use him as a straight man, which I think he enjoyed because of the comic roles he played early in his career. And I remember his refusal to move his TV program from the local network to one of the major networks, because he felt a loyalty to the local station for giving him a start. He could have made a lot more money by the move, and I respect a person who will do something like that. Working for Spade was one of the highlights of my career.

GRIFFIS: Looking back over your career, Hank, in retrospect do you feel the inflexibility that you showed with Foreman Phillips and others worked against you in reaching your full potential?

PENNY: *Oh yes,* there's no doubt about that. a person does at the time what seems right. When you review that action years later, you can always see how you could have done it better. I guess we all have faced problems in our youth that may have an impact on our later life. I've never told anyone this before, but I think my early exposure to religion created some real problems for me later on. As a youth, my father

scared me to death with his "You'll go to Hell" preaching. He was a good man, but he was slightly fanatical on the subject of religion. I can remember, even years later, waking up and feeling this was the night I would die. That was to haunt me for years to come. How much effect that had on my professional career is difficult to say.

GRIFFIS: Was your mother of help to you?

PENNY: Oh, she was a sweet, loving person and did all she could, but dad was the boss. I must add that he was a fine person and I guess he carried a burden too. But that fear of religion pursued me all through my career. As an example, I remember once I was looking for an apartment near where I was performing and I discovered the apartment was near a church. So I looked around for another place. I know that sounds silly today, but at the time the fear was real. But I must go on record saying that I can't blame my mom or dad for the problems I encountered. But, possibly, the ungodly fears placed upon me made me unsuited to handle the pressures to come. Does that make any sense to you?

GRIFFIS: Of course it does. Put the same pressure on one hundred people and you will likely find dozens of different responses.

PENNY: Well, despite it all I've had more than my share of the breaks and I really can't blame anyone else for my problems. I guess people get out of life what they put in. But, it's important that a person come to grips with their problems, and I'm so glad that I have reached that point. As I said earlier, I've come to accept things as they are and have made peace with myself.

GRIFFIS: That's so important, Hank, and it shows a great deal of maturity.

PENNY: I suppose so, Ken. The main things in my life at present are my daughter, Sydney, and my dear wife, Shari. You may have heard that we have formed a management company where we handle the business affairs of several people we know. Personally, I feel great and things are working out very well.

GRIFFIS: It appears that Sydney has been rather busy with her budding TV career over the past couple of years. I guess that's personally satisfying to you.

PENNY: It sure is, Ken. She has completed a couple of dozen or so TV commercials and five or six important TV roles. She just completed a nine-hour mini-series, "The Thornbirds," that will air

next Spring. It stars Richard Chamberlain, Jean Simmons, Barbara Stanwyck, and Richard Kiley.

GRIFFIS: Sounds like a great line-up. You can take a lot of pride in your little girl, Hank. And in your "big" girl too.

PENNY: I do, Ken. I'm very proud of my family. When I consider everything, I've been blessed and I know that I'm a very lucky guy. If there is a Heaven, I'm in it right now. Before we adjourn this little get together, Ken, I would like to confide in you as a close friend. I've never felt that I could relate this to anyone else, but I feel you will understand what I'm trying to say. It will give you a better idea of how I've come to accept things as they are. As I've indicated to you, I never was what you

call a religious person, but at the same time I always tried to do what is right. To help me find that inner peace that is so important, I have made a list of people for whom I want good things to happen. Each morning I start the day off by reading all these names and express my wishes that only good things will come to them. I can only hope that it does influence those people, as I know that in doing this, it has helped me.

GRIFFIS: Perhaps "Outlaw" doesn't fit quite as well as that "Plain Ol' Country Boy"-- talented, uncomplicated, and straight.

PENNY: Thanks Ken. I'll consider that a compliment.

GRIFFIS: It was meant to be.

--North Hollywood, CA

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Hank Penny and His Radio Cowboys, ca. 1939. (l to r) Louis Dumont, Sheldon Bennett, Noel Boggs, Carl Stewart, Boudleaux Bryant, Hank Penny.



(l to r) Harold Hensley, Hank Penny, Al Tonkins, Hank Caldwell, Speedy West (Cowtown, Los Angeles 1948)



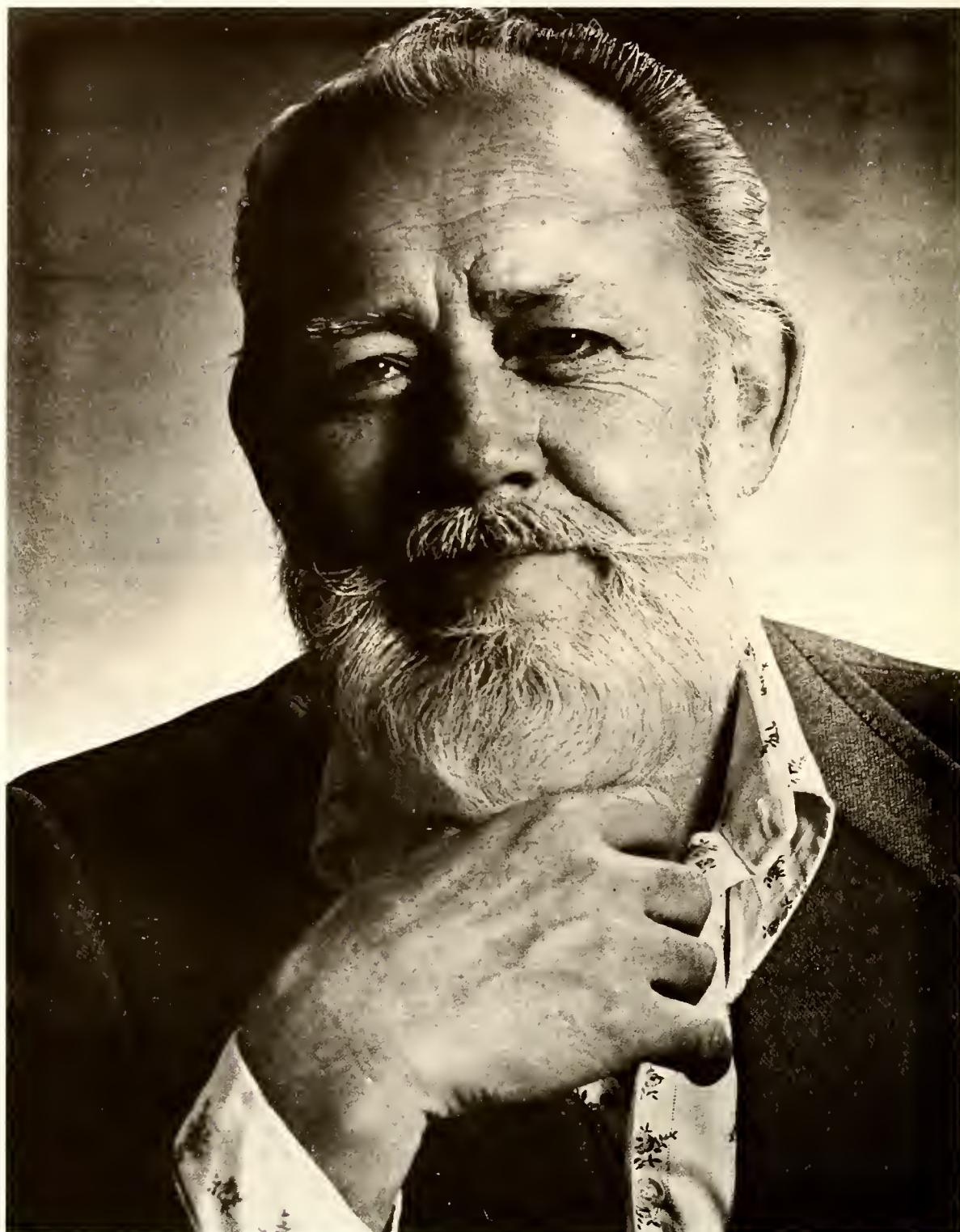
At the Riverside Rancho, 1948 (l to r) Billy Hill, Hank Penny, Hank Caldwell.



Rehearsing a small group at the Palomino, late 1950.  
(l to r) Benny Garcia, Hank Penny, Vic Davis, Roy Harte,  
Pete DiMaggio.



Hank Penny and His Painted Post Rangers at Hoot Gibson's  
Painted Post Club, Los Angeles 1946. (l to r--rear) Joe  
Bardelli, Jack Peltier, unknown, Dick Roberts, Johnny Mor-  
gan; (front) Hank Penny, Slim Duncan.



Hank Penny

## HANK PENNY DISCOGRAPHY: 1938-1980 \*

By Rich Kienzle

[This Hank Penny discography is an updated version of the one which appeared in *Old Time Music* No. 28 (Spring 1978).]

In forty-two years Hank Penny recorded 200 songs commercially, and recorded at least forty-seven known numbers for radio transcriptions and for broadcast over the Armed Forces Radio Network. Penny's recordings have varied both in their instrumental lineups and in their overall quality. Virtually all of the talented musicians who served their apprenticeships with him--Boudleaux Bryant, Noel Boggs, Harold Hensley, Speedy West, Jaye P. Morgan, Billy Strange, Curly Chalker, and Tom Bresh--were with him for at least some recordings. In the case of Boggs it was on several occasions.

The quality of Penny's recordings depended upon a variety of factors: the producer, the time element (he has complained of being rushed in the studio by no less than the venerable Steve Sholes of RCA), the quality of the musicians around him, and by the vagaries of the western swing market. As western swing rose in popularity, the quality of his musicians--and his recordings--soared. One can hear the Radio Cowboys, for example, develop from a relatively crude imitation of Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies at the Cowboys's first session with Art Satherley in 1938, into a far smoother, more daring band with the addition of Boudleaux Bryant and Noel Boggs in 1939. Steel guitarist Eddie Duncan changed the texture of the band, but even on the Cowboys's final date in 1940 (a pickup band, since Hank disbanded the group earlier that year) there remains a certain cohesion reflecting his own increased understanding of the western swing idiom and of the rudiments of leading a band.

Though his 1944 debut session for King was musically primitive, his next session in Los Angeles in 1945 proved his ability to stay on top of the trends toward a smoother sound while retaining stellar soloists. The material he recorded from 1945 to 1950 in Los Angeles--save two sessions done in Cincinnati and Nashville respectively--equalled anything that was being done by Spade Cooley or Tex Williams, and demonstrated Penny's ability to forge a distinctive sound of his own, relying on an accordion as the glue that held his bands together. The 1947 Cincinnati session with Homer and Jethro was an anomalous occasion, brought about by

pressure from King president Syd Nathan. The Nashville session of late '47, however, produced some superb music--less polished than the records he made with his West Coast sidemen, but no less exciting. He recorded with a sympathetic group of musicians brought together by his close friend Louis Innis. But it was his 9 March 1950 session, produced by King rhythm and blues producer Henry Glover, that produced the definitive Hank Penny recordings. They featured a tight, innovative western band built around guitarist Benny Garcia, steel guitarist Herb Remington, and a number of other fine L.A. musicians.

Penny's RCA sessions were of a uniformly high musical quality, featuring an equally stellar band (and some of the finest steel guitar work Noel Boggs ever recorded). But the excellence of the music was somewhat dissipated by the incredible mediocrity of the songs themselves. Most were facile, insipid novelties, built on puns and other low humor, that were hackneyed even in the early fifties. In some cases these songs were literally forced upon Penny. A few, such as Cindy Walker's "Tater Pie" and the rocking "Fan It," were outstanding.

By the time of his first Decca session in 1954 Penny was married to vocalist Sue Thompson. Yet it is clear that the quality of music had plummeted, hardly a surprising fact considering the near-moribund state of western swing at that time. In addition, Penny was moving toward a greater emphasis on comedy. By the time he did his final session in 1956 he was leading a pop band with saxophone and trumpet.

Penny's recording career became spotty after that. In 1961 he led a band for a pop/jazz session for the NRC label in Atlanta, recorded in Las Vegas with the pop/country band he was fronting in Vegas. Unfortunately, no recordings have ever surfaced of his fine 1962 band that featured both steel guitarist Curly Chalker and guitarist Roy Clark, though Penny does have some audio tapes of Chalker recorded live at the Showboat. His Pen-Sound LP was a self-produced affair to be sold at shows, and his Wasp sides were a mix of straight country music and comedy numbers. His most recent recording, on the late Jimmy Wakely's Shasta label, was a remake of his theme song,

"Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon," written by Rex Griffin in the late 1930s.

This discography was compiled over the space of two years, from 1976 to 1978 with various new

information added as material has been reissued, rediscovered, etc. It was assembled with help from Hank Penny, Tony Russell, Charles Wolfe, Bob Pinson, Keith Kolby, Frank Driggs of RCA, and the late Louis Innis.

(The earliest recordings made by Hank Penny and his Radio Cowboys were test pressings cut at WSB in Atlanta in 1938, which were given to ARC producer Art Satherley in Atlanta that year by Penny. Shortly after that, Hank and the Radio Cowboys were signed to ARC, and recorded for that company for the next three years. The releases were issued on the Conqueror, Vocalion, Okeh, and Columbia labels.)

(All selections preceded by \* are cross-referenced in the "Guide to LP Issues" at the end of the discography.)

ARC: 1938-1941. All sessions produced by Art Satherley.

Hank Penny, vocal & guitar; Sammy Forsmark, steel guitar; Louis Dumont, tenor banjo; Carl Stewart, bass, vocal (all vocals by Penny unless otherwise noted); Sheldon Bennett, fiddle.

Recorded at the Columbia Hotel, Columbia, South Carolina 9 November 1938

SC-116	Back Up a Little Bit	Vo 04640, *Rambler 103
SC-117-1	They're All Just the Same to Me	Vo 04922
SC-118	Sweet Talkin' Mama	Vo 04543, *Rambler 103
SC-119	Flamin' Mamie	Vo 04543
SC-120	One Sweet Letter from You (voc., Bennett)	Vo unissued
SC-121	Ridin' on the Old Ferris Wheel	Vo unissued
SC-122-1	Cowboy's Swing (instrumental)	Vo 05438, CQ 9392, *Rambler 103
SC-123-1	Blue Melody	Vo 04826
SC-124-1	She's Just that Kind	Vo 04741; Co 37733, 20310
SC-125-1	Mama's Getting Young	Vo 04826, *Rambler 103
SC-126-1	Cheatin' on You Baby (voc., Bennett)	Vo 04741; Co 37733, 20310
SC-127-1	Hesitation Blues (voc., Penny & Bennett)	Vo 04922, *Rambler 103
SC-128	When I Take My Sugar to Tea (voc., Stewart)	Vo unissued
SC-129	I've got the Right Key Baby	Vo 04640

As above, with Noel Boggs replacing Forsmark on steel guitar, and the addition of Boudleaux Bryant on fiddle.

Recorded at the Gayoso Hotel, Memphis, Tennessee 8 July 1939

MEM-20-1	Hot Time Mama	Vo 05380, *Rambler 103
MEM-21	Red Hot Papa	Vo 05321; Cq 9391; Co 37740, 20317
MEM-22	I Want My Rib	Vo 05026
MEM-23	Chill Tonic (instrumental)	*Epic EG 37324
MEM-24	I Hate to Lose You (voc., Bennett)	Vo unissued
MEM-25	Walking Home from an Old Country School	Vo unissued
MEM-26-1	All Night and All Day Long	Vo 05215, *Rambler 103
MEM-27	Take it Slow and Easy	Vo 05270
MEM-28	The Last Goodbye	Vo 05148, Cq 9711
MEM-29	Black Eyed Susie (voc., Stewart)	Vo 05270
MEM-30-1	You're So Different	Vo 05215
MEM-31	Tonight You Belong to Me	Vo 05148, Cq 9711
MEM-32	I Told Them All About You	Vo 05321; Cq 9391; Co 37740, 20317

4 July 1939

MEM-33-2	It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'	Vo 05067, Cq 9332, *OT 119
MEM-34-1	Yankee Doodle Dandy (voc., Bennett & Dumont)	Vo 05067, Cq 9332
MEM-35-1	I Like Molasses	Vo 05380, *OT-119
MEM-36	Mississippi Muddle (instrumental)	Vo 05026
MEM-37-1	Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Vo 05438, Cq 9392, *Rambler 103

Bennett is no longer in the group; Eddie Duncan replaces Noel Boggs on steel guitar.

Recorded at the Stevens Hotel, Chicago, Illinois 10 June 1940

WC-3088-A	Just a Message	OK 05654
WC-3989-1	Just for Old Time's Sake	OK 06004
WC-3090-A	I Don't Love Anybody but You	OK 05957
WC-3091-A	Say Mister! Have You Met Rosie's Sister?	OK 05438, Cq 9708, *Rambler 103

11 June 1940

WC-3092-A	Just Forget	OK 05844, Cq 9708
WC-3093-A	Oh Yes? Take Another Guess	OK 05654, *Rambler 103
WC-3094-A	Peach Tree Shuffle (instrumental)	OK 05724, Cq 9710, Co 37750, *OT 117
WC-3095-A	Steel Guitar Hula (instrumental)	OK 05724, Cq 9710, Co 37750
WC-3096-A	Hawaiian Honeymoon (instrumental)	OK 05797, Cq 9709, *Rambler 103
WC-3097-A	Looking for Somebody to Love (voc., Dumont)	OK 05957
WC-3098-A	Tobacco State Swing (instrumental)	OK 05797, Cq 9709, *Rambler 103
WC-3099-A	One of Us Was Wrong	OK 06004

Penny, vocal, guitar; Carl Stewart, bass (doubling piano on "Somebody"); Jimmy Colvard, steel guitar; Eddie Smith, harmonica; Kelland Clark, accordion.

Recorded in unknown hotel in Charlotte, North Carolina 29 June 1941

CHAR-17;30918	Blue Ridge Blues	Cq 9846, *Rambler 103
CHAR-18;30933	Midnight Blues	Cq 9847
CHAR-19;30920	Standin' 'Neath the Old Pine Tree	Cq 9846
CHAR-20;30920	Why Did I Cry	OK 06522, Cq 9844, Co 37666
CHAR-21;30921	Army Blues	OK 06426, CQ 9845
CHAR-22;30922	Off to Honolulu	OK 06426, CQ 9845
CHAR-23;30923	Somebody	OK 06522, Cq 9844
CHAR-24;30924	Lonesome Train Blues	OK 06522, Cq 9844, Co 37666, *Rambler 103

NOTE: For the above sessions, one set of master numbers, at the left, were assigned in Charlotte. The others were assigned in New York after the sessions were completed.

KING: 1944-1950. Sessions produced by Syd Nathan except where noted.

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Carl Stewart, fiddle & bass; Zed Tennis, fiddle; Roy Lanham, electric guitar; Louis Innis, guitar & bass, Richard ?, trumpet.

Recorded in attic of Wurlitzer Music Co., Cincinnati, Ohio ca. 1944

K-1912	Tearstains on Your Letter	King 507
K-1913	Last Night	King 507
K-1914	Hope You're Satisfied	King 512
K-1915	Talkin' 'Bout You	King 512

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Merle Travis, lead guitar; Noel Boggs, steel guitar; Allen Reinhardt, bass; Frank Buckley & Stan Ellison, accordions; Harold Hensley, fiddle.

Recorded at KXLA Radio Studio, Hollywood, California ca. late summer-fall, 1945

K-1938	Bless Your Heart, Little Girl	King 521
K-1939	Merle's Buck Dance (2 takes)*	King 581
K-1940	If Only You'd be True	King 521
K-1941	Please Don't be Sorry for Me	King unissued
K-1942	Steel Guitar Stomp	King 528, *EP-291, *AL-1546
K-1943	I'm Wasting My Time	King 748
K-1944	I'm Singing the Blues	King 519
K-1945	Don't You Know it's Wrong	King 1090
K-1946	When You Cry, You Cry Alone	King 519
K-1947	I'm Counting the Days	King 528
K-1948	Now Ain't You Glad, Dear	King 842
K-1949	Two Timin' Mama	King 1122

\*Two takes of "Merle's Buck Dance" were issued.

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; George Bamby, accordion; Charlie Morgan, lead guitar; Eddie Bennett, piano; Jimmy Widener, rhythm guitar; Bob Morgan, bass; Dick Roberts, steel guitar; probably Harold Hensley, Slim Duncan, Johnny Paul, fiddles; Truman Quigley, trumpet.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California ca. late 1945

K-1989	Time Will Tell	King 551, *AL-1508
K-1990	I Just Can't Understand	King 534
K-1991	Flamin' Mamie	King 534, *AL-1508
K-1992	Missouri	King 540

Joe Bardelli replaces Bennett on piano. Harry "Slim" Duncan plays clarinet on the session.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California, ca. early 1946

K-2022	Please Don't be Mad at Me	King unissued
K-2023	These Wild, Wild Women	King 551
K-2024	I'm Gonna Change Things	King 672
K-2025	Get Yourself a Red Head	King 540

Max Fidler replaces Johnny Paul, fiddle; Ralph Miele replaces Dick Roberts, steel guitar; Eddie Bennett replaces Joe Bardelli, piano.

Recorded at Universal Recorders, Hollywood, California ca. mid-1946

K-2190	I'm a Different Man from Now On	King unissued
K-2191	I've Waited as Long as I can Wait	King unissued
K-2192	Low Down Woman Blues	King 1122
K-2193	Penny Blows His Top	King 621
K-?	Penny Blows His Top (alternate take)	*AL-1546, *EP-293

NOTE: The alternate take of "Penny Blows His Top" was inexplicably titled "Cowtown Boogie" and credited to Ocie Stockard on AL-1546. On EP-293 it is credited to Penny, but under the title "Boogie Woogie Now."

K-2198	Here Today, Gone Tomorrow	King 597
K-2199	Texas in My Soul	King 581
K-2200	I'm Not Surprised	King 672
K-2201	Steel Guitar Polka	King 639, 1021; *AL-1508, 1568; *EP-295

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California ca. mid-1946

K-2214	My Inlaws Made an Outlaw Outta Me	King 813
K-2215	Guess Who Took Your Place	King 941
K-2216	Wildcat Mama	King 597
K-2217	Red Hot Mama and Ice Cold Papa	King 770

Joe Bardelli replaces Eddie Bennett on piano. Add Freddy Cianci, fiddle.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California ca. late 1946

K-2258	My Life is No Bed of Roses	King unissued
K-2259	Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	King 639, 1021; *EP-253; *GTV-108
K-2260	Back Up a Little Bit	King 1020, 1090
K-?	Last Night	King unissued

NOTE: No matrix number exists on "Last Night" but aural evidence from a tape in Penny's possession strongly indicates it was recorded at this session.

Jerry Brent & his Orchestra: Band personnel unknown; Hank Penny, vocal & narration; Dick Roberts, steel guitar.

Recorded at unknown nightclub, Hollywood, California ca. 1946

Hank Penny, vocal & guitar; Homer Haynes, rhythm guitar; Jethro Burns, mandolin; Larry Downing, bass; Eddie Wallace, piano; Roy Lanham, electric lead guitar.

Recorded at King Studios, 1540 Brewster St., Cincinnati, Ohio ca. early-1947

K-2277	The Freckle Song	King 606, 614, *EP-253
K-2278	Let Me Play with Your Poodle	King 606, 614, *EP-253
K-2279	Open the Door, Richard	King 606
K-2280	Locked Out	King 621

Hank Penny, vocal; Red Foley, rhythm guitar; Zeke Turner, lead guitar; Bob Foster, steel guitar; Joe Ross, accordion; Malcolm Crane, trumpet; Louis Innis, bass.

Recorded at Castle Studios, Tulane Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee ca. late 1947

K-2617	Hillbilly Jump	King 698, *EP-295, *AL-1568
K-2618	Why Didn't I Think of That	King 711
K-2619	Kentucky	King 698
K-2620	Wouldn't it be "Pun"	King 727
K-2621	I Won and Lost My One and Only	King unissued
K-2622	Got the Louisiana Blues	King 842
K-2623	Sweet Talkin' Mama	King 795
K-2628	Politics	King 711
K-2629	One Heart, One Love, One Life	King 770, *AL-1508
K-2630	You Better Save it for a Rainy Day	King 957
K-2631	Someone Moved the Ladder	King 748
K-2632	Big Fat Papa	King 727, *LP-1006

Slim Duncan, fiddle & clarinet; Speedy West, steel guitar; Dick Morgan, electric guitar; Frank Buckley, accordion; Joe Bardelli, piano; Hank Penny, guitar & vocals; John Morgan, bass; Jack Peltier, drums.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California 9 March 1949

K-2877	I Was Satisfied	King 828, *AL-1508
K-2878	We Met Too Late	King 813, *AL-1508
K-2879	Hillbilly Bebop	King 795; *AL-1508, 1546; *Tishomingo LP-2220
K-2880	Bloodshot Eyes	King 828, 1500, #EP-253; *AL-1508; *Nashville NLP-2084, 2098

NOTE: Hillbilly Bebop on AL-1546 is mistitled "Jimmie's Jump" and credited to Jimmie Widener.

ARMED FORCES RADIO SHOW: "Melody Roundup #2013 - Host: Redd Harper"

Hank Penny, leader & guitar; Benny Garcia, electric lead guitar; Speedy West, steel guitar; Bud Sievert, accordion; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Hank Caldwell, bass; Warren Penniman, drums; Billy Hill, fiddle.

Recorded ca. 1949

Texas Playboy Rag (instrumental)	Melody Roundup 2013
Throw a Saddle on a Star (voc., Caldwell)	" " "
Jealousy (instrumental)	" " "
South (incomplete)	" " "

NOTE: To Penny's recollection, this airshot was probably recorded at the Riverside Rancho

Billy Hill, fiddle & viola; Billy Wright, fiddle & possibly viola; Hank Penny, vocals; Mary (Jaye P.) Morgan, vocal assistance on "Riding on the Old Ferris Wheel"; Herb Remington, steel guitar; Stan Ellison, accordion; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Mildred Springer, bass; Pee Wee Adams, drums; Benny Garcia, lead guitar; Charlie Morgan, rhythm guitar.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California 3 March 1950  
(Session produced by King A&R man, Henry Glover)

K-2996	Riding on the Old Ferris Wheel	King 941
K-2997	What've You Got	King 891
K-2998	Wham! Bam! Thank You, Ma'am	King 869, 1500; *AL-1508
K-2999	Tell Me All About Georgia	King 924, *AL-1508
K-3000	The Solitary Blues	King 924
K-3001	Jersey Bounce	King 869, *EP-291; *AL-1546
K-3002	Tuxedo Junction	*King EP-291, *AL-1546
K-3003	I'm Gonna Have My Picture Took	King 902, *AL-1508
K-3004	Remington Ride	King 902, #EP-295; *AL-1508, 1546
K-3005	Alabama Jubilee	King 1020
K-3006	You're So Different	King 957
K-3007	Tin Pan Polka	King 891
K-?	Heska Holka	King unissued
K-?	Benny's Bugle	King unissued

NOTE: The two unmatrixed titles were recorded at this session but unissued, and no matrix number has been found for them. Copies of the tapes are in Penny's possession.

#### ARMED FORCES RADIO SHOW

Hank Penny, vocal & guitar; Billy Strange, vocal & electric guitar; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Mildred Shirley (Springer), bass & vocal; Benny Garcia, electric lead guitar; Stan Ellison, accordion; Billy Hill, Max Fidler, fiddles and violas; Warren Penniman, drums; Eddie King, announcer.

Recorded at Riverside Rancho, North Hollywood, California ca. early-1950

Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	AFRS #48, Ser. 17S
Steel Guitar Rag (instrumental)	" "
Mona Lisa (voc., Strange)	" "
'Tater Pie	" "
We Met Too Late	" "
Farewell Blues (instrumental)	" "
I'm Movin' On (voc., Strange)	" "
Blue Moon (voc., Shirley)	" "
Panhandle Rag (instrumental)	" "
Farewell Blues (reprise of previous performance)	" "

RCA VICTOR: 1950-1952. All sessions produced by Steve Sholes and Henri Kene.

Hank Penny, vocal & guitar; Billy Strange and Benny Garcia, electric guitars; Joaquin Murphey, steel guitar; Stan Ellison, accordion; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Mildred Springer, bass; Max Fidler and Billy Hill, fiddles; Warren Penniman, drums.

All sessions recorded at the RCA Victor studios in Hollywood.

12 October 1950 (9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.)

EO-VB-5002-1, 1A	Just for Old Time's Sake	RCA 21-0406, 48-0406
EO-VB-5003-1, 1A	'Tater Pie	RCA 21-0406, 48-0406
EO-VB-5004-1, 1A	Change of Heart	RCA unissued

NOTE: On all RCA releases, the left-hand release number is the 78-rpm, the right-hand, the 45-rpm.

Billy Wright replaces Fidler and Hill on fiddles; Noel Boggs replaces Murphey on steel.

23 January 1951 (8:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.)

E1-VB-533-1, 1A	A Bad Penny Always Returns	RCA 21-0436, 48-0436
E1-VB-534-1, 1A	What She's Got is Mine	RCA 21-0466, 48-0466, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-535-1, 1A	Taxes, Taxes	RCA 20-4633, 47-4633, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-536-1, 1A	No Muss-No Fuss-No Bother	RCA 21-0436, 48-0436, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-537-1, 1A	Hold the Phone	RCA 21-0466, 48-0466 *BFX-15102

#### STANDARD RADIO TRANSCRIPTIONS

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Mildred Springer, bass; Noel Boggs, steel guitar; Billy Hill, fiddle & viola; Warren Penniman, drums; Jaye P. Morgan, vocals on "Waiting Just for You," vocal assistance on "I Like the Wide Open Spaces"; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Stan Ellison, accordion.

Recorded at Radio Recorders, Hollywood, California ca. early-1951. Produced by Harry Bluestone.

Kiss Me Baby (But Take Your Time)	V-179, *Castle LP-8010
Wang Wang Blues (instrumental)	" "
Rabbits Don't Ever Get Married	" "
The Penny Opus No. 1 (instrumental)	" "
Hold the Phone	" "
No Muss-No Fuss-No Bother	" "
Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	" "
Progressive Country Music for a Hollywood Flapper (instrumental)	" "
Don't Start Breathin' down My Neck	" "
Mister and Mississippi	" "
Waiting Just for You	V-180
I LIke the Wide Open Spaces	" "
Cross Your Heart	" "
Flamin' Mamie	" "
I'm Not in Love, Just Involved	" "
Taxes, Taxes	" "
Peroxide Blonde	" "
Ship of Broken Dreams	" "
Things are Gettin' Rough All Over	" "
Big Footed Sam	" "
The Mink on Her Back (Brought the Wolf to My Door)	V-185
Catch 'em Young, Treat 'em Rough, Tell 'em Nothin'	" "
Crazy Rhythm (instrumental)	" "
White Shotguns	" "
You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey	" "
Alabama Jubilee	" "
You're So Different	" "
We Met too Late	" "
I Want My Rib	" "
September Song	" "

Hank Penny, vocal; Billy Hill, fiddle; Joaquin Murphey, steel guitar; Billy Strange & Roy Lanham, guitars; A. Tracey, accordion; Vic Davis, piano; Pete DiMaggio, bass; Roy Harte, drums.

Recorded at RCA Victor Studios, Hollywood, California 12 July 1951 (8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.)

E1-VB-679-1, 1A	Catch 'em Young, Treat 'em Rough, Tell 'em Nothin'	RCA 21-0501, 48-0501, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-680-1, 1A	White Shotguns	RCA 20-4363, 47-4363, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-681-1, 1A	I Like Molasses	RCA 21-0501, 48-0501, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-682-1, 1A	I Wany My Rib	RCA 20-4363, 47-4363, *BFX-15102

Hank Penny, vocal; Jaye P. Morgan, vocal assistance on "You Played on My Piano"; Noel Boggs, steel guitar; Roy Lanham, guitar; Billy Liebert, accordion; Vic Davis, piano; A. Lambert, bass; Roy Harte, drums.

Recorded 8 November 1951 (8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.)

E1-VB-3850-1, 1A	You Played on My Piano	RCA unissued, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-3851-1, 1A	You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey	RCA 20-4633, 47-4633, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-3852-1, 1A	(Won't You Ride in) My Little Red Wagon	RCA 20-4414, 47-4414, *BFX-15102
E1-VB-3853-1, 1A	The Mink on Her Back	RCA 20-4414, 47-4414, *BFX-15102

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Jaye P. Morgan, vocal assistance on "Makin' Love Tennessee Style"; Rex Galleon, electric guitar; Jimmy Wyble, electric lead guitar; Jo Ella Wright, piano; Von Galleon, bass; Dick Shanahan, drums; Noel Boggs, steel guitar.

Recorded 17 June 1952 (8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.)

E2-VB-7033-1, 1A	Makin' Love Tennessee Style	RCA 20-5023, 47-5023
E2-VB-7034-1, 1A	Sweet Mama Put Him in Low	RCA 20-5023, 47-5023
E2-VB-7035-1, 1A	If I Can't Wear the Pants	RCA 20-4862, 47-4862
E2-VB-7036-1, 1A	Hadicillin Boogie	RCA 20-4862, 47-4862, *BFX-15102

Wyble out; Jaye P. Morgan, vocal assistance on "Fan It," and "That's My Weakness Now."

Recorded 20 November 1952 (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

E2-VB-7033-1, 1A	You Can't Pull the Wool Over My Eyes	RCA 20-5282, 47-5283, *BFX-15102
E2-VB-7034-1, 1A	I Want to Live a Little	RCA 20-5150, 47-5150.
E2-VB-7035-1, 1A	Fan It	RCA 20-5282, 47-5283, *BFX-15102
E2-VB-7036-1, 1A	That's My Weakness Now	RCA 20-5150, 47-5150, *BFX-15102

#### ANDY PARKER & THE PLAINSMEN RADIO SHOWS

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Andy Parker, guitar; Harry Sims, fiddle; George Bamby, accordion; Clem Smith, bass; Charlie Morgan, guitar.

Recorded at KHJ Studios, Hollywood, California ca. 1952

Missouri	*Castle LP 8010
Hold the Phone	*Castle LP 8010

DECCA: 1954-1957. All sessions produced by Paul Cohen and/or Bud Dant at the Decca studios in Hollywood.

Hank Penny, guitar, vocals; Sue Thompson, vocal assistance on "Walkin' in the Snow," and "Come a Bit Closer"; Charlie Morgan, guitar; Bob Morgan, bass; Joaquin Murphey, steel guitar; Muddy Berry, drums.

Recorded 14 September 1954. Producer: Paul Cohen

7890	Walkin' in the Snow	Decca 29314
7891	Come a Little Bit Closer	Decca 29314
7892	Bloodshot Eyes	Decca 29597
7893	untitled number	Decca unissued

Add Billy Brown, vocal.

Recorded 22 April 1955. Producer: Paul Cohen

8355	High Heels but No Soul (voc., Brown)	Decca 29559
8356	Drunk-Drunk Again (voc., Brown)	Decca 29559
8357	I Can't Get You Out of My Mind	Decca 29560
8358	When They Ask About You	Decca 29560

NOTE: Decca 29559 issued with artist credit to Billy Brown, not Penny

Hank Penny, spoken monologue.

Recorded 10 May 1955. Producer: Bud Dant

87821	A Letter from Home	Decca 29597
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NOTE: This recording was made as a demo to be submitted to Paul Cohen for possible future use on a formal recording session. Decca released it against Penny's wishes.

JIMMY WAKELY SHOW: ca. mid-fifties All sessions recorded at CBS Studios, Hollywood, California

comedy monologue + Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Shasta LP 517
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Hank Penny, vocals, guitar; Speedy West, steel guitar; Charlie Morgan, guitar; Freddie Haynes, piano; Bob Morgan, bass; Muddy Berry, drums; Sue Thompson, background vocals.

Recorded 5 April 1956. Producer: Bud Dant

9127	Southern Fried Chicken	Decca 29926
9128	I'd Rather Pick a Guitar	Decca unissued
9129	Rock of Gibraltar	Decca 29926
9130	Wham! Bam! Thank You, Ma'am	Decca 30179

As above, with Charlie Aldrich, banjo-guitar added.

Recorded 9 April 1956. Producer: Paul Cohen

9174

Texas Never Would-a Made It

Decca 30179

Hank Penny, vocals, guitar; Sue Thompson, vocals on "Walkin' to Missouri," and "Red Hot Henrietta Brown"; Mark Tully, bass; Helmut Kraemer, piano; Jack Kent, percussion; Arno Marsh, tenor saxophone; Joe Graves, trumpet; Homer Escamillia, vocal on "Baby, Baby, Baby I Love You" and "Fool's Lament."

Producer: Paul Cohen

10014	Big Footed Sam	Decca 30313
10015	The Cricket Song	Decca 30313
10016	A Night at the Copa	Decca 30531
10017	Baby, Baby, Baby I Love You	Decca unissued
10018	Fool's Lament	Decca 30531
10019	Walkin' to Missouri	Decca 30435
10020	Red Hot Henrietta Brown	Decca 30435

NOTE: Decca 30435 was issued under Sue Thompson's name.

NRC: 1961. Produced by Boots Woodall

Hank Penny, guitar; Glenn Blair, trumpet, tenor sax and flute; Arno Marsh, tenor sax; Don Owen, piano; Mike Tripp, drums; Sheldon Bennett, overdubbed guitar solo on "Is it True What They Say About Dixie"; Mark Tully, bass.

Dixie	*NRC-LPA-7
Little Rock Getaway	"
Is it True What They Say About Dixie	"
Memphis Blues	"
Darkness on the Delta	"
My Old Kentucky Home	"
Yankee Doodle Dandy	"
Chicago	"
Lullaby of Broadway	"
Autumn in New York	"
Moonlight in Vermont	"
Jersey Bounce	"

Hank Penny, guitar; Curly Chalker, steel guitar; Marty Allred, drums; Mark Tully, bass; Glenn Blair, tenor sax, flute, trumpet; Frank Maio, tenor sax; possibly Roy Clark, guitar.

Recorded at Main Room, Harrah's Club, Lake Tahoe, Nevada ca. 1962

Stars Fell on Alabama	unissued
Idaho	unissued

PEN-SOUND (Penny's own record label): 1966.

Hank Penny, vocals, guitar; Tom Bresh, vocals, guitar; trumpet; banjo; bass; Tom Russell, organ; Shari Bayne, vocal; Frank Maio, tenor sax, trumpet.

Recorded at Hesperia Inn, Hesperia, California ca. 1966. Produced by Hank Penny

Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	*Pen-Sound LP (no number)
Wheels (Bresh, guitar solo)	"
Que Sera, Sera (voc., Bayne)	"
Chloe (voc., Maio)	"
Make the World Go Away (voc., Bayne)	"
Mame (voc., trumpet, banjo: Bresh)	"
Dented Fender (Penny, guitar solo)	"
Indian Love Call (voc., Bayne)	"
Medley: Blue Bell/I'll See You in My Dreams (Bresh, guitar solo)	"
Body and Soul (Maio, sax solo)	"
California Medley (voc., Bayne)	"

NOTE: The above LP, *The Hank Penny Show*, was produced for sale at personal appearances.

WASP: 1969. All sessions produced by Ron Bieberthaler and Bill Wiley

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Tom Bresh, guitar; Shari Penny, vocal overdubs; Tom Mitchell, bass guitar; Gene Breedon, overdubbed guitar; Bob May, drums; Penny plays solo guitar and vocal on "Savin' Up Coupons."

Recorded at Wiley Studios, Takoma, Washington ca. 1969

That Same Old Feelin'	Wasp WR-?
A Letter from Home	Wasp WR-?
Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Wasp WR-126
The Strong Black Man	Wasp WR-126
Savin' Up Coupons	Wasp unissued
You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey	Wasp unissued
There's a Red Light in Your Window	Wasp unissued

SHASTA: 1980. Produced by Jimmy Wakely

Hank Penny, vocals & guitar; Jimmy Wakely, piano; Stan West, bass; Archie Francis, drums.

Recorded at Jimmy Wakely Home Studio, Sylmar, California May, 1980

Won't You Ride in My Little Red Wagon	Shasta unissued
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#### GUIDE TO LP ISSUES

AUDIO LAB AL-1508	<i>Hank Penny Sings</i>
AUDIO LAB AL-1546	<i>Swing Billies</i> (a western swing anthology)
AUDIO LAB AL-1568	(title unknown)
AUDIO LAB EP 291-295	Volumes 1 through 5 (EP version of <i>Swing Billies</i> )
BEAR FAMILY BFX-15102	<i>Rompin', Stompin', Singin', Swingin'</i> (to be released early 1983)
CASTLE LP-8010	<i>Country and Western Memories</i> (German import)
EPIC EG-37324	<i>OKEh Western Swing</i> (1981 western swing anthology)
GUSTO GTV-108	<i>Country Hits of the 1940s</i>
KING EP-253	<i>Hank Penny</i>
KING LP-1006	(title unknown)
NASHVILLE NLP-2084	(title unknown)
NASHVILLE NLP-2098	(title unknown)
NRC LPA-7	<i>It's War Again! (Jazz War, That Is)</i>
OLD TIMEY OT-117	<i>Western Swing</i> (Vol. 3)
OLD TIMEY OT-119	<i>Western Swing</i> (Vol. 4)
PEN-SOUND (no #)	<i>The Hank Penny Show</i>
RAMBLER 103	<i>Tobacco State Swing: Hank Penny and His Radio Cowboys</i>
SHASTA LP 517	<i>The Way They Were--Back When</i>
TISHOMINGO 2220	<i>Rollin' Along: An Anthology of Western Swing</i>

--Greensburg, Pennsylvania

## A HISTORY OF THE MOUNTAIN BROADCAST AND PRAIRIE RECORDER

By Eddie Nesbitt

I read with great interest Archie Green's fine article on early country music journals (*JEMFQ XVI*, No. 59), and I would like very much, if I may, to tell you the story of *The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder*.

Green places *Song Exchange News* as a first! But, it seems to me that *The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder* (henceforth, *MBPR*) was really the daddy of them all. I was a hillbilly entertainer at radio station WSVA, Harrisonburg, Virginia, in the Fall of 1939, when I received my first copy of *MBPR*, which was dated November 1939, Vol. 1, No. 3. Since they stated on their masthead that they were published "Now and Then," it would be safe to assume that the first of the two preceding issues were published as early as January 1939. (Do any *JEMFQ* readers have the first two issues of *MBPR*?)

The first thirteen issues of *MBPR* were from twelve to sixteen pages, 6 1/2" x 9 1/2" (up through Vol. 2, No. 7); with Vol. 3, No. 1 until the final issue the size was increased to 8 1/2" x 11". There were five issues in what I will call "The Middle Series" (March, 1942 through January, 1944). There was a gap of nearly a year between the March 1943 (Vol. 3, No. 4), and the next issue, which was dated January, 1944 and numbered "18." We were right in the middle of WW II at this time, and of course there was a paper shortage--so they simply stopped publication for a while and labeled their next issue "No. 18," which denoted the number of issues published from its beginning up to that time--or anyway, this is my theory. Thus ended the "Middle Series" and marked the beginning of "The New Series," so aptly described in Green's story. It was with the "New Series" that a slick, two-color cover with a full-page picture of a hillbilly radio/recording star or group first appeared.

There were no front covers on the first eighteen issues of *MBPR*. The feature story began on the first page in triple columns with nearly always a small picture of a hillbilly radio artist and/or a member of the editorial staff. Let us now take a look through the pages of the November, 1939 No. 3 issue (the first one I have). We will find on the front page a story entitled "Tillie Boggs Just Can't Stay Away From Sunset Corners." Tillie Boggs was a comedienne on "The WHO Iowa Barn Dance" (from station WHO, Des Moines, Iowa). Page two finds for us an assortment of small pictures of hillbilly artists who were performing during this

period of time. We turn to page three and find "Guitar Facts" by Jimmie Webster, and "Who's Who on Page Two," a description of the pictures on page two and throughout the magazine. Page four takes us "Down the Smokey Mountain Trail" by Mel Foree and tells us news of hillbilly radio artists in the Southeast, with the "Very important news" that the Grand Ole Opry made its first appearance on a thirty-minute NBC hookup--October 14, 1939--and lists all the artists appearing on this historic broadcast. Page five--"The Mail Box" by R. F. Dee features letters to the editor, by various hillbilly artists around the country. Page six will find a promo for the song folio, distributed with the magazine, as well as a short story concerning John Lair's construction of a "Modern Tourist Camp" and Barn at Renfro Valley, Kentucky--where he would be planning to broadcast his radio show "The Renfro Valley Barn Dance," featuring Ramblin' Red Foley and the Coon Creek Girls over WLW in Cincinnati, Ohio.

From its beginning, *MBPR* was edited by Zeb Whipple (obviously a pen name for a Broadway song writer, music publisher, or New York promoter of hillbilly music). The editorial staff began to increase as this little magazine grew. Such names as Jimmie Webster (who hosted a "Guitar Picker's" column), the aforementioned Mel Foree (writer of the hit standard, "No One Will Ever Know"; Mel became a friend of mine around 1944, when he was in the Navy stationed near Washington, D.C., and I was pickin' and singin' over radio station WINX in that city), Webb Whipple (Zeb's brother?), Jinnie Rodgers (a gal), Sammy Foresmark, Tex Marks, Tommie Gentry, Constance Keith, Happy Wilson (later of Happy and Kitty Wilson fame), William Ralph Cross, "Doc" Embree, Dick C. Land, and Floy Case (Floy was from Ft. Wroth when her column first started on *MBPR*, but I had the pleasure of visiting in her home when she lived in Arlington, Virginia). Others were later added to the editorial staff when the "New Series" appeared on the scene, but these have already been mentioned in Green's article.

The first thirteen issues of *MBPR* were published by Rialto Music Publishing Corp., 1674 Broadway, N.Y.C.; but beginning with the last of the smaller issues, the publisher became Dixie Music (of the same address--the reason for this will be discussed later. The address was later

changed to 45 Astor Place, N.Y.C. in June 1945.

The first eighteen issues of *MBPR* were devoted primarily to professional hillbilly radio entertainers and recording artists and were mailed free of charge to any radio station that featured live hillbilly music--and there were lots of them all over this great land of ours back in those days. You readers have probably noticed that I have been using the term *hillbilly* instead of *country*; the reason--it was called *hillbilly* back then; the term *country* hadn't been "invented" as yet. The mast-head of each issue of *MBPR* bore the inscription "Devoted to the Interest of Radio and Recording Artists," but beginning with Vol. 1, No. 1 of the "New Series," the mast-head was changed to read "Devoted to the American Tradition of Folk Music" (the term *hillbilly* was beginning to lose favor at this time--while the "New Series" was still published with the professional entertainer in mind, it was becoming more and more fan-oriented.

The only advertiser that appeared in the earlier issues of *MBPR* was the Fred Gretsch Manufacturing Company, makers of Gretsch Guitars. Their full-page ad appeared in every issue through March 1945. There were Gretsch ads that also appeared in the "New Series." The first--December, 1943--and then in the final six issues of *MBPR*. Also in the last six issues were full-page ads, on the back covers, for 4 Star Records, of Hollywood. Starting with the No. 3 (March, 1945) issue of the "New Series" *MBPR* carried classified ads, and began accepting small ads such as the Doc Williams "By Ear" Guitar Course. Also, beginning with December, 1941 and ending with the January, 1944 issue, ads appeared which were directed to the radio entertainers--"Make Money Selling Song Books," referring, of course, to radio artists across the country selling Dixie Music songbooks on the air and on personal appearances. These were the songbooks that were distributed along with the magazine. I would assume that each individual radio artist who sold these books would have them "personalized" with his or her own front cover, pictures, bio, radio station call letters, etc.; however, I have never actually seen any of these folios.

With the first of the "Middle Series" (March, 1942), "The Song Roundup Club" was instituted for the hillbilly fans. This entitled a member to receive four copies of *MBPR* and four songbooks, *Roundup of Song Hits for Radio and Recording*, at the cost of one dollar, with "Special rates for professional people only." With the March, 1943 issue, the price went up to \$1.50; and when the "New Series" began (September, 1944), the price was \$2.00 in the U.S. and \$2.50 in Canada--for professionals and non-professionals alike. This price remained in effect until the June, 1946 issue--with the September 1946 issue, the price was upped to \$2.50 per year.

I have just received from Ivan M. Tribe (the author of a soon-to-be-published book on the history of country music and musicians in West Virginia) complete xerox copies of six additional

issues of *MBPR* that I previously did not know existed! Heretofore, this little magazine was published "Every now and then"--usually about every four months. However, beginning with the September 1946 issue *MBPR* was published on a monthly basis, up until what was apparently the final issue--which was dated February-March, 1947. The reason for the cutback was given as "Severe shortage of paper" and "Generally unsettled labor conditions." However, subscriptions were still being solicited. Did *MBPR* actually publish beyond this February-March, 1947 date? I'd be interested in knowing.

The song folios accompanying *MBPR* also present a point of interest. There were thirty-five different songbooks, either distributed with *MBPR* or mailed separately to professional hillbilly entertainers from 1939 to 1949 in the hopes, of course, that these songs would be used on their radio programs, personal appearances, or recording sessions. From 1939 until 1941, these songbooks were published by Rialto Music, an affiliate of ASCAP (American Society of Composers and Publishers). However, there was a period of time, beginning in 1941, when ASCAP songs were banned from the airwaves due to a union disagreement. It was at this time that Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) was formed; so from 1942 up until the final song folio, the publisher became Dixie Music, a BMI affiliate.

These song folios had no front covers; the title of the songbook and the table of contents were on the first page. The first small folios (*Songs of the Mountains and Plains*) started out with only fifteen or sixteen songs, but as the years passed by, many more songs were added to each little songbook, and toward the ending of the series, many folios contained well over thirty songs. All songs were complete with words, piano music, and guitar chords. The first nine folios were just a trifle larger than the first nine issues of *MBPR* with which they were mailed. They carried the inscription at the top of the page, "Complimentary, not to be sold" and bore the title, *Songs of the Mountains and Plains*. The next two folios used the same title but were larger in size and were numbered "one" and "two." Thus ended the Rialto publications. There was no songbook mailed with the No. 12 issue of *MBPR* (Vol. 2, No. 6; September, 1941) due to the ASCAP strike. However, starting with the next issue, the last of the "Smaller Series," the first copy of *Roundup of Song Hits for Radio and Recording* was instituted. There were sixteen of these folios (do any JEMFQ readers have No. 9--I don't) and numbers two through six were mailed with the five issues in the "Middle Series." These were the songbooks mailed out in the "Song Roundup Club" previously mentioned.

Mailed along with next five issues of the "New Series" were five folios. The first was simply titled "Song Section--September, 1944, No. 1." The following four songbooks were titled *Songs of the Mountains and Prairies*, and each copy sported an attractive sketch-type drawing on the front page (along with the table of con-



**BLUE BONNET (Continued)**

WILLS, RAY WHITLEY, as well as most of the bands around Ft. Worth and Dallas (at one time or another) is with DON WESTON on the west coast ... EDDIE DEAN, can be heard on the CBS JUDY CANOVA show, Tues. nights, 8:30 P.M. EWT. . . . FRED KIRBY, who was until recently at KMOX, is at WBT and is the star of the DIXIE JAMBORIE as well as the BLARHOPPERS' daily programs . . . SUSIE, THE GAL FROM THE HILLS, is appearing on the SHADY VALLEY PROGRAM, which can be heard thru the Mutual Stations, 10:30 A.M. EWT.

A word of explanation to those who have been wondering about my address being Maryland or Virginia and my mentioning Washington, D. C. so frequently. The fact is, that Arlington, Va. is just across the beautiful Potomac River from the District of Columbia and is really just a suburb of D.C. So until next issue, thanks again for everything and keep the mail coming my way! So long, folks!

**MAIL BOX (Continued)**

To the Editor:  
Thought I'd drop you a line and let you know how things are going down here in the Sunny South. I understand you fellows up there are getting some mighty cold weather, but down here it's JUST FINE.

I'm enclosing one of our latest photos, Grady, Hazel and Little Jackie Cole, The Original Country Cousins. We are on the air daily Monday through Saturday at 6:30 A.M. on WGST here in Atlanta.

Jackie is our little nine year old son who is really making a hit using such songs as "YOU WON'T KNOW TOKIO WHEN WE GET THROUGH" "IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME" "BEAUTIFUL MORNING GLORY" "HITLER'S LAST ROUNDUP" "GRANDMA DRIVES US CRAZY" —

**LATE NEWS FLASH**

Mr. J. C. Case and Mrs. Floyd Case announce the arrival of a nine pound baby boy, Gerald Wayne Case, born November 24. He does not play much guitar yet, but we understand he has a first class triple yodel. Congratulations to the proud parents!



**THE ONE AND ONLY --**

# Red River Dave



Says Dave: "I just want my many friends to know that my new Gretsch Sychromatic Guitar is without a doubt the finest guitar in the world."

Drop us a card to-day for complete details.

**The Fred Gretsch Mfg. Co.**

60 Broadway,  
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

# MAKE MONEY! SELLING SONG BOOKS

Many artists are MAKING BIG MONEY — RIGHT NOW! selling Dixie Music Pub. Co. song books over the air and at personal appearances.

They all say their customers are delighted with the books and just can't understand how we can publish such fine books for the low price charged.

Write in to-day for full particulars, and start grabbing some of this EASY MONEY for yourself.

**DIXIE MUSIC PUB. CO.**

New York 19, N.Y.  
1674 Broadway

JOIN THE YOUNG ROUNDUP CLUB — Full Particulars on Page 4

**THE MOUNTAIN BROADCAST AND PRAIRIE RECORDER**

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RADIO AND RECORDING ARTISTS

Vol. 3 March, 1943

KEEP 'EM FLYING! ★ BUY WAR STAMPS

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No. 4

## DOWN BLUE BONNET WAY

By FLOY CASE

1

Coming as a welcome relief to the boys

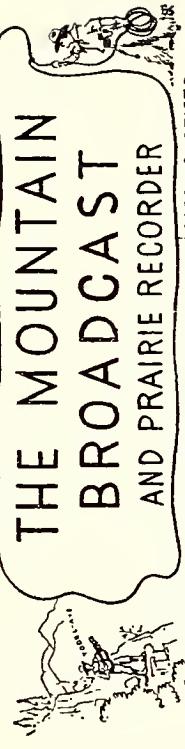
in the band, was the time change for the program of BILL BOYD'S COWBOY RAMBLERS, WCR. For twelve years these boys have been arising in the wee small hours to make the program around 7 A.M. Now, they are on the air from 11:15 to 12:00 noon daily. BILL BOYD is present for these programs between pictures and tours for UNCLE SAM, and during his absences, the program continues under the direction of brother Jim. Bill's third successive appearance at the Dobson, Ala. Fair in October, was the most successful ever played there. While in this territory, he went on into Georgia and Florida, playing to tens of thousands of soldiers in camps, and then on his return to the west, played to very receptive crowds in Mississippi cities. During the past few months, he has coupled his devotions with those of HAL BURNS, of station WMC, MEMPHIS, TENN., in Decatur, MISS., LUDIE, the harmony team of PATTY & PATSY, and LIE. ORD HALL, the new fiddler, were BILL BOYD, THE COWBOY RAMBLER OF WCR, Dallas, and PRG WESTERN PICTURES, Hollywood; HERALD GOODMAN, and his gang, KGKO, WFAA, Dallas; ERNEST TUBB, the DECCA recording star of Ft. Worth and Hollywood; BOB & JOE SUEHLTON & THE SUNSHINE BOYS, KWHT-H, Shreveport, La.; JIMMIE AND LEON, THE SHORT BROTHERS, WDAP, KGKO, Ft. Worth; MILL & JOE CALLAHAN, KWFJ, Wichita Falls; and TIX LEE, KJZ, Ft. Worth, and possibly others whose names I don't have. Considering the line-up, it MUST have been a swell show!

I plan to use as much news from my native Texas and the southwest as possible, however the amount used depends largely on you entertainers there, for I'm out of touch of most of you programs. You have cooperated so splendidly in the past, I'm sure you won't fail me now! Though I'm missing the old familiar programs, and 'live' hillbilly shows in this immediate vicinity are scarce, I'm happy to have the opportunity to hear many newcomers from the south and mid-west. Consequently, many grand artists who, until now, have been merely "name," to me, have become a reality, and from time to time, I will bring you news of these in connection with the gossip from the southwest.

Hi Neighbor! And greetings from our beautiful, but bustlin', nation's CAPITOL, Washington, D. C. A brief thank you to all who have cooperated in any way, in making this column possible, and for all your fine cards and letters. When one is far away from home, a word from a friend can mean a lot!

(See Page Two)

MORE THAN 8,000 READERS THIS ISSUE



# THE MOUNTAIN BROADCAST AND PRAIRIE RECORDER

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RADIO AND RECORDING ARTISTS

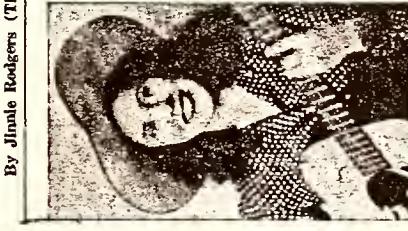
No. 6

MAY, 1940

1

## Corn Belt Comments

By Jimmie Rodgers (The Arizona Rodeo Queen)



No. 4

MARCH, 1943

1

Coming as a welcome relief to the boys in the band, was the time change for the program of BILL BOYD'S COWBOY RAMBLERS, WCR. For twelve years these boys have been arising in the wee small hours to make the program around 7 A.M. Now, they are on the air from 11:15 to 12:00 noon daily. BILL BOYD

is present for these programs between pictures and tours for UNCLE SAM, and during his absences, the program continues under the direction of brother Jim. Bill's third successive appearance at the Dobson, Ala. Fair in October, was the most successful ever played there. While in this territory, he went on into Georgia and Florida, playing to tens of thousands of soldiers in camps, and then on his return to the west, played to very receptive crowds in Mississippi cities. During the past few months, he has coupled his devotions with those of HAL BURNS, of station WMC, MEMPHIS, TENN., in Decatur, MISS., LUDIE, the harmony team of PATTY & PATSY, and LIE. ORD HALL, the new fiddler, were BILL BOYD, THE COWBOY RAMBLER OF WCR, Dallas, and PRG WESTERN PICTURES, Hollywood; HERALD GOODMAN, and his gang, KGKO, WFAA, Dallas; ERNEST TUBB, the DECCA recording star of Ft. Worth and Hollywood; BOB & JOE SUEHLTON & THE SUNSHINE BOYS, KWHT-H, Shreveport, La.; JIMMIE AND LEON, THE SHORT BROTHERS, WDAP, KGKO, Ft. Worth; MILL & JOE CALLAHAN, KWFJ, Wichita Falls; and TIX LEE, KJZ, Ft. Worth, and possibly others whose names I don't have. Considering the line-up, it MUST have been a swell show!

HERALD GOODMAN — TEXAS BARN DANCE FIESTA heard each morning at 9:45 A.M. KGKO is continuing to be a hit with the listeners in that territory. They also have a barn dance show on Sat. nights, and the highlight of this seems to be the comedy character created by HERALD GOODMAN as COUSIN HERALD GOODMAN of Dibble Springs!

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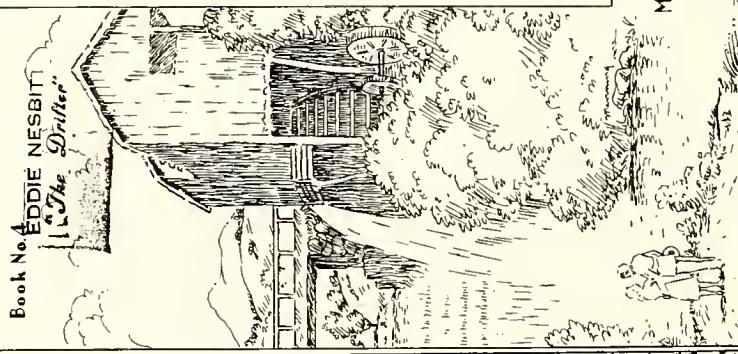
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MOUNTAIN BROADCAST PUB. CO., INC.  
45 ASTOR PLACE - NEW YORK 3 - N.Y.

## ROUNDUP OF SONG HITS —FOR— RADIO AND RECORDING

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This is Book No. 1 in the "Roundup of Song Hits" series.

# Truck Driver's Blues

(Blues Song)

Words and Music by  
TED DAFFAN

**Blues Tempo**

1. Feel-in tired and wea-y, from my head down to my shoes, I aint got no time to lose,

Keep them wheels a-roll-in, I aint got no time to lose,

Ride, ride, ride, honk-y tonk gal, I've got trou-bles to drown.

Never did have noth-in, I got noth-in much to lose,

Got a low down feel-in,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

5

2. Ride, ride, ride, honk-y tonk gal, I've got trou-bles to drown.

Never did have noth-in, I got noth-in much to lose,

Never did have noth-in, I got noth-in much to lose,

Got a low down feel-in,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

Truck Dri-vers Blues,

\*Diagrams for Guitar. Symbols for Chords and Rhythms.

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tents) depicting one of the songs included in that folio. I find a mysterious gap in the numbering of these particular songbooks--my copies of *Songs of the Mountains and Prairies* begin with No. 3. There either must have been a No. 2 of the "Song Section" or a No. 2 of the *Songs of the Mountains and Prairies*. (Maybe I lost one out of my collection!) My memory fails me as to which songbooks went along with the remaining issues of *MBPR*; however, there were three folios entitled *Famous Folio of Songs to Remember*. I believe that these were mailed separately from the songbooks, as were the remaining ten of the sixteen *Roundup of Song Hits for Radio and Recording*.

These "professional copy" song folios graced many a hillbilly picker's music library--including my own--for ten years. Actually the song folios outlived the little magazine. Within the pages of these Rialto and Dixie songbooks were many songs that later became country music classics. First published in the song folios were such standards as "Filipino Baby," adapted by Bill Cox from an earlier Spanish-American song, first recorded on the ARC record complex by Bill Cox and Cliff Hobbs; later a WW II hit by Cowboy Copas on King Records. "Don't Let Your Sweet Love Die," co-written by Zeke Manners of the original Beverly Hill Billies and recorded by Roy Hall and his Blue Ridge Entertainers on Bluebird. "Sparkling Eyes," also written by Bill Cox, was a hit for the Mainer's Mountaineers on Bluebird, and later a hit by Jerry and Sky on MGM as "Sparkling Brown Eyes," and still later by Webb Pierce on

Decca back in the fifties. "Truck Driver's Blues" was the very first truck driver's song; it was written by Ted Daffan and recorded on Decca by Cliff Bruner. "The Tramp on the Street" was written and first recorded by Grady and Hazel Cole on Bluebird, and later became a million seller on Columbia for Molly O'Day. "Why Not Confess" was on Bluebird by the Blue Sky Boys. "If I Should Wander Back Tonight" was first recorded by a picker and singer named Perry Westland from Silver Spring, Maryland (near Washington, D.C.), and later by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. "I'll Still Write Your Name in the Sand" and "Sweet Thing" (originally titled "Sweetheart") were both written by the great Buddy Starcher. In fact, these folios contained the entire catalogue of Buddy's compositions during these years. And there are many more that I've forgotten about, without looking back through all these books in my file cabinet.

In conclusion, I would like to say there could never have been a book written on the history of live country music radio from 1939 to 1947 that would give such an insight into these "Golden Years" as did these thirty-two gems--*The Mountain Broadcast and Prairie Recorder*. They played a very important part of the country music scene during those troubled and changing times--before, during, and after World War II. Anyone fortunate enough to own even a few copies of this little magazine or the songbooks possesses a treasure indeed.

--Washington, D.C.

"OUR GOODMAN" IN BLACKFACE AND "THE MAID" AT THE SOOKEY JUMP:  
TWO AFRO-AMERICAN VARIANTS OF CHILD BALLADS ON COMMERCIAL DISC

By John Minton

During the first decade of race recording, a period analogous to "The Golden Age of Hillbilly Music," commercial companies gathered a wide variety of song types and musical styles from Southern blacks. Innovations appeared on discs: ragtime, gospel, jazz, classic blues by Bessie Smith and sisters, country blues by Blind Lemon Jefferson and brothers. In addition, the companies bidding for the race market recorded considerable material from an earlier era, originating in pre-blues Afro-American secular music. Such material, dating back before the abolition of slavery, had many ingredients--instrumentation, performance styles, song types--which later came to be understood in terms of their parallels in Anglo-American tradition.

The old Afro-American pre-blues music included sacred and secular themes, dance tunes, work chants, lyric songs, and ballads. The instrumentation might vary from a single guitar to a full fledged string band. The performers who continued to play the older songs after the advent of the blues are now generally referred to as "songsters." Although the twentieth-century songster usually included some blues in his repertoire, he might also play and sing spirituals, minstrel and medicine show favorites, ragtime popular songs, hillbilly numbers, and folk ballads, of both Afro- and Anglo-American origin.

The Child ballads had been an integral part of the pre-blues tradition and were occasionally featured by twentieth-century songsters. Two of Child's thirty American texts were recovered from blacks in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In addition to citing Professor Child's Afro-American texts, Dorothy Scarborough printed or mentioned twenty variants of ten Child numbers recovered primarily from Virginia, but also from North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.<sup>2</sup> Most of these texts represent a kind of full circle in tradition since the informants were generally whites who often learned the ballads during childhood from blacks. Among blacks, as among their white neighbors, the Child Ballads seem to have found their most appropriate and congenial setting in the home, but occasionally they were adapted for more public purposes.

This article will analyze two such Afro-American variants of Child Ballads on commercial

recordings which have already received a great deal of scholarly attention: "Drunkard's Special," a variant of "Our Goodman" (274); "Gallis Pole," a variant of "The Maid Freed From the Gallows" (95). They were sung by Texas-based songsters Coley Jones and Huddie Ledbetter, respectively, whose contrasting styles and careers offer some excellent insights into the continuity between nineteenth- and twentieth-century Afro-American folksong. Despite the fact that both of these performers put their versions to uses which differed greatly from the conventional function of Child Ballads, each recording has largely maintained its original form, and is, therefore, best comprehended in relation to its Anglo-American analogues.

During the twenties Texas produced as diverse a body of race recordings as any other Southern state.<sup>3</sup> Two early classic blues singers Sippie Wallace and Victoria Spivey, came from Houston. Most of the black music in Texas during the twenties, however, centered around Dallas, with its rapidly expanding black population, and the saloons and brothels of "Deep Elum." Dallas boasted rough country blues players like Blind Lemon, Alger "Texas" Alexander, and Willard "Ramblin'" Thomas, supplemented by the smoother sophisticated style of Lonnie Johnson, a prodigious traveler who was often in town. Alex Moore played barrelhouse piano in the style that had developed in the lumber camps of the Southern pine belt.

Blues by no means monopolized the Dallas scene. Blind Willie Johnson played guitar in a blues style with a bottleneck, but his subjects were sacred and his singing was deeply rooted in the spiritual tradition. Washington Phillips sang gospel and accompanied himself on the dulcetola, a type of hammered dulcimer, while Henry "Ragtime Texas" Thomas played in an archaic songster style on guitar and quills (pan pipes). Coley Jones and his Dallas String Band played minstrel and pop tunes and string ragtime; in the previous decade Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) had been in town leading a similar group, when he wasn't playing with Blind Lemon. In addition to the influx of displaced rurals such as Leadbelly, the minstrel troupes, medicine shows, and circuses brought musical influences from the Delta and beyond. Leadbelly recalled first hearing jazz, sung by a female singer, in a Dallas tent show during the early 'teens. This was the

musical atmosphere in the fall of 1927 when the first commercial company, represented by Frank Walker and his Columbia field unit, arrived in Dallas to record race music.

Coley Jones: "Drunkard's Special" (274)

Very little information exists on Coley Jones and his Dallas String Band, and had it not been for their brief association with Columbia in the twenties, probably nothing at all would be known. Jones's life and career are a mystery, but his recordings link him to the minstrel tradition of the nineteenth century. The minstrel influence was still very strong among both blacks and whites throughout the South during this period, largely because of the medicine shows which continued to hire blackface banjo, fiddle, and guitar players long after the large minstrel troupes moved toward more "refined" entertainments.<sup>4</sup> In the first part of the century the medicine shows offered one of the few employment opportunities for rural musicians of both races; a high proportion of the early hillbilly and race artists had worked in medicine shows, and both they and others who had no direct connection with minstrelsy preserved a great deal of this older tradition on record. The Dallas-based Blind Lemon sang a few minstrel pieces as did the songster Henry Thomas, and one of the most popular white string bands around Dallas during the twenties was Prince Albert Hunt and his Texas Ramblers. Hunt had a strong minstrel flair and performed in blackface at times.

It seems probable that at the time of Jones's Columbia recordings he was an older man, possibly of the generation of Gus Cannon or Jim Jackson (born ca 1880, early race artists who had been long-time medicine show performers). The voice on "Drunkard's Special" does not sound particularly youthful. One of the songs that Jones recorded for Columbia at his first session in December of 1927 was "Papa Coley's Past Life Blues," which also implies that he was a performer of advanced years.<sup>5</sup> In any case, Jones was steeped in the minstrel tradition. Paul Oliver describes his technique as being "naively modeled on that of the vaudeville stage [and] ideally suited to comic narrative songs of the type which included 'The Elder's He's My Man,'" a good natured attack on ministerial duplicity (a common minstrel song type) and the flip side of another comic narrative, "Drunkard's Special" (Columbia 14489-D).<sup>6</sup> Jones's only other solo release was the minstrel show standard "Traveling Man," issued on Columbia 14288-D, coupled with "An Army Mule in No Man's Land." In March of 1928 Columbia ran the following ad in several newspapers directed toward a black readership:

The Columbia Phonograph Company has added three new Race stars to its catalog. Coley Jones, a Texas singer of blues, has been called the new Bert Williams for his personal magnetism,

though he has a style all his own. Lewis Black, another new find, came from a logging camp in Arkansas. He wears a coonskin cap all the time and is called the Daniel Boone of the blues. The Dallas String Band is a unique little organization of stringed instrument players from in and around Dallas. All the boys in the band sing and they play engagements varying from dance halls to street concerts.<sup>7</sup>

Bert Williams was a famous "coon" singer, the first successful black in a vaudeville tradition dominated by whites in blackface, and his recordings for Columbia had sold very well.<sup>8</sup> Although the press release does not mention it, Jones was also the leader of the Dallas String Band, one of the many "serenading" groups working in Dallas and throughout the South at this time. (They were hardly as unique as the press release asserts.) These groups were the urban descendants of the pre-blues string band tradition, playing saloons and "street concerts" for coin in the inner city or down in the wealthier residential districts in front of the "white folks'" homes. In addition they still usually played for picnics and breakdowns in the surrounding rural districts.

At their first recording session in 1927, the Dallas String Band consisted of Coley Jones, mandolin; a second unknown mandolin; Sam Harris, guitar; and Marco Washington, bowed bass or cello. Jones also relied on minstrel material when he worked with his group. They recorded "Shine" one of the most popular songs from the late "coon" song era, and "The Hokum Blues."<sup>9</sup> In addition to the minstrel songs, their repertoire included pop numbers like "(I'm Always) Chasin' Rainbows" and "I Used to Call Her Baby." Their most famous recording (mainly because of its re-issue) is the instrumental "Dallas Rag," a classic of country ragtime. Jones's solo recordings did include some material from black folk tradition, such as the spiritual "Oh Death, Where is Thy Sting," and "Frankie and Albert" (Laws 13), neither of which was issued. The songs that Columbia chose for release generally reflect the "coon" singer image of their ad campaign.

Ironically, the recording for which Jones is best remembered is his solo rendition of a traditional British ballad, number 274 in Child's collection, "Drunkard's Special."<sup>10</sup> The song is not, however, incompatible with the minstrel material which he primarily recorded, and may even be a legacy of his involvement in vaudeville. The protagonist of "Drunkard's Special" is a buffoon of the type common to "coon" songs. In the supplement to Tristram Coffin's *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, Roger deV. Renwick mentions a "coon" song from Mississippi that contains a stanza of "Our Goodman."<sup>11</sup> (Under the same entry he cites "Drunk-

ard's Special.") A minstrel version of a Child ballad would not be a unique occurrence. In *Texas Folk Songs*, William Owens writes under his entry for "The Gypsy Laddie" (Child 200) that "what [he] consider[s] to be the most interesting version of this ballad was printed by DeMarsan [New York broadside printer] as a broadside about 1860. The dialect may be genuinely Negro, but more likely it is the work of a white minstrel singer."<sup>12</sup> The adaption of "Our Goodman" by minstrels would partially account for the ballad's enormous popularity throughout the South.

Coley Jones and his band recorded for Columbia during the company's annual field trip to Dallas early each December between 1927 and 1929. In 1927 and 1929 Jones recorded both as a solo (vocal and guitar) and with the string band; in 1928 only the group recorded. Eventually twelve sides were released in Columbia's 14000-D series, four by Coley Jones and eight by the Dallas String Band. "Drunkard's Special" was from the final session in 1929; Columbia did not return the following December and neither Coley Jones nor the Dallas String Band (as such) recorded again.

"Our Goodman" is one of the most common and widespread of the Child Ballads in the United States (and one of the few bawdy songs to gain wide currency in this country). It was also extremely popular on commercial recordings from the twenties and thirties. Judith McCulloh provides transcriptions and an excellent analysis of three hillbilly versions of Child 274.<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Scarborough notes that this ballad had passed into black tradition, and two versions by blues singers exist: "Cat Man Blues" by Blind Boy Fuller, and "Wake Up Baby" by Sonny Boy Williamson.<sup>14</sup> Bertrand Bronson publishes a transcription of both the tune and text of "Drunkard's Special" in *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, citing Harry Smith's Anthology as the source.<sup>15</sup> Bronson places the melody in the same melodic group as two hillbilly recordings (one by Georgia musicians Emmet Bankston and Red Henderson, the other by the radio comedy team Mustard and Gravy). Most other commercial recordings of this ballad also use some variation of this basic melody.

Bronson's transcription of "Drunkard's Special" is in turn cited by Roger deV. Renwick in his supplement to *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*.<sup>16</sup> Renwick assigns it the Coffin "C" story type; this is in the tradition of Child's Scottish "A" text, since the wife has only one suitor, but the action takes place on three successive nights.<sup>17</sup> This is also the most common Coffin type for recordings of this ballad. Jones's recordings do not reveal a general awareness of contemporary hillbilly tradition. The resemblance between "Drunkard's Special" and hillbilly recordings of Child 274 may be indicative of the role or influence of the minstrel stage in disseminating

this ballad and establishing a standardized hillbilly version. Jones's version follows:

- 1.a. First night when I went home  
Drunk as I could be  
There's another mule in the stable  
Where my mule ought to be.
- b. Come here, Honey,  
Explain yourself to me:  
How come another mule in the stable  
Where my mule ought to be?
- c. O crazy, O silly,  
Can't you plainly see?  
It's nothing but a milk-cow  
My mother sent to me.
- d. I've traveled this world over,  
Million times or more,  
Saddle on a milk-cow back  
I never did see before.
  
- 2.a. Second night when I got home  
Drunk as I could be  
Found another coat on the coat-rack  
Where my coat ought to be.
- b. Come here, Honey,  
Explain this thing to me:  
How come another coat on the coat-rack  
Where my coat ought to be?
- c. O crazy, O silly,  
Can't you plainly see?  
Nothing but a bed-quilt  
Where your coat ought to be.
- d. I've traveled this world over,  
Million times or more,  
Pockets in a bed-quilt  
I've never seen before.
  
- 3.a. Third night when I went home  
Drunk as I could be  
Found another head on the pillow  
Where my head ought to be.
- b. Come here, Honey, come here,  
Explain this thing to me:  
How come another head on the pillow  
Where my head ought to be?
- c. O crazy, O silly,  
Can't you plainly see?  
That's nothing but a cabbage-head  
That your Grandma sent to me.
- d. I've traveled this world over,  
Million times or more,  
Hair on a cabbage-head  
I've never seen before.

This text is fairly close to most others which fit the Coffin "C" type. It follows the common "milk cow/bed quilt/cabbage head" pattern (although Jones substitutes "mule" for the more typical horse; in some hillbilly versions an automobile supplants the quadruped).<sup>18</sup> Some unusual features of the "Drunkard's Special" text

are the variation in the fourth line of the wife's reply, which usually remains constant, the "O crazy, O silly" instead of the usual "you blind fool, you crazy fool," the "hair on a cabbage head" instead of the more typical "mustache," and the text's verbal economy. Spoken interjections often appear in variants of this ballad, including Child's "A" text. The title "Drunkard's Special" is unique for this ballad, but hardly unorthodox.

Jones's musical style is often compared to that of his hillbilly contemporaries, but, as Paul Oliver's comments imply, it may owe more to the influence of the minstrel stage. His mournful delivery on "Drunkard's Special" may be a reflection of the characteristic pathos of the "coon" singers. The vocal melody uses a pentatonic scale, lacking both semi-tones (the fourth and the seventh), in the plagal range of the Ionian mode.<sup>19</sup> (p~~1~~<sup>1</sup> in Bronson's symbology. The major seventh does appear in the V chord of the accompaniment and in the guitar break, and a raised fourth (C#) is provided by the II<sub>7</sub> chord in the guitar accompaniment).

Jones's guitar playing on this recording is rather pedestrian compared to his virtuoso mandolin picking on "Dallas Rag," but he provides a solid accompaniment for his voice and delivers a competent break. He plays in a style that by this period at least was more characteristic of hillbilly performances, but it is possible that he acquired it in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century before the guitar had great currency among whites. Actually, in the nineteenth century the banjo and the fiddle were the traditional stringed instruments of the minstrels, but others were used, and in the twentieth century minstrel singers conformed to the general trend toward the guitar, especially in the medicine shows.

Jones does use a flat-pick, which was not typical of musicians of either race during this period. The accompaniment is in the key of G, standard tuning, and consists of a simple country ragtime progression of the type common to minstrel pieces (I-I-I-II<sub>7</sub>-V-I). He generally plays a bass note on the beat followed by a strummed chord, with a strummed flourish at the end of the melodic strain. The bass notes alternate between the D string (open), the G string (open), and E on the D string (second fret); in the latter case he is actually playing an E minor (iv) chord (E-G-B-G) on the top four strings. He seems to be outlining the vocal melody with the bass notes. There is, however, no constant sequence. The bass note generally coincides with the unaccented syllable, with the strum falling on the accent of the voice.

The mandolin was apparently Jones's primary instrument and this seems to have influenced his guitar style, in his use of the flat-pick for example. He played mandolin exclusively on the string band's recordings, but on his individual efforts he resorted to the guitar, an instrument

much more suited to solo accompaniment. On "Drunkard's Special," however, Jones does not really make use of the guitar's deeper range; in fact, he plays most of the accompaniment on the top four strings. (In changing from the I to the II<sub>7</sub> chord he strikes "B" on the "A" string (second fret), then drops to the A string (open), followed by the II<sub>7</sub> chord. These are the only notes played below the top four strings, which only encompass a fifth below the range of a mandolin in standard tuning.) There is a two measure guitar break at the beginning of the song and between 1. and 2.

This performance exhibits many of the irregularities that typify old time music. The time signature remains fairly, but not completely, uniform. After 2c Jones apparently loses his place and begins the guitar break; before he resumes the break and sings 2d on line 3 of 3a HE, changes to the V chord for the first half of the measure before returning to the I. (Ordinarily he plays the I chord throughout this strain.) Although "Drunkard's Special" does not exhibit the radical increase in tempo typical of old time performances, Jones is not completely warmed up at the beginning of the song and his playing becomes more assured as he goes. This was the first of four sides (two solos and two with the string band) that Jones recorded that day, and he sounds as if he just sat down at the mike. He misses the opening run and his playing throughout the first break is a little shaky. Despite its very basic nature the guitar part has a definite effect on the character of the melody, especially in its use of the Ionian seventh and the "ragtime" resolution of the chord progression (II<sub>7</sub>-V-I).

Coley Jones did not become "the new Bert Williams." According to Samuel Charters, "Coley Jones sounded so much like a hillbilly performer that his records sold better to white listeners than they did to colored; though they didn't sell in number to anybody."<sup>20</sup> Obviously Jones's style was already outside of the mainstream of race music by the time he recorded. Because of the nature of his recordings there is certainly some question as to whether Coley Jones was conversant at all in the newer blues style; according to Paul Oliver the members of the Dallas String Band "were well known for their blues in person."<sup>21</sup> The Columbia press release calls Coley Jones "a Texas singer of blues," but this term was randomly applied to most race artists; likewise many of his recordings bear the tag blues, but this label was used as indiscriminately as rag had been ten or twenty years before. Although he may never have made the adaptation himself, Jones definitely had contact with the blues; the young T-Bone Walker was a member of the Dallas String Band in the twenties, and he may have been the guitarist at their final session on Thursday, 6 December 1929.<sup>22</sup> Walker had made his first solo recordings for Columbia the day before, on the same day that Jones was in the studio recording with singer Bobbie Cadillac and the important Texas blues pianist Alex Moore.<sup>23</sup>

It seems probable that Columbia's recording of "Drunkard's Special" is an authentic recreation of a minstrel stage performance of a Child Ballad; the few facts which are available about Coley Jones's musical influences and the character of the performance itself both point to this conclusion. As Columbia race artists, Coley Jones and his Dallas String Band may not have sold very well, but almost all that is known about these important Dallas musicians must be deduced from their recordings, and hopefully these will receive further attention in the future.

Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly)  
"Gallis Pole" (95)

The career of Huddie Ledbetter is as well documented as Coley Jones's is obscure. It also provides ample illustration of the shift in the type of music appearing on race records in the thirties, and of the complementary nature of the activities of the commercial companies and folklorists involved in recording Afro-American folksong, such as John and Alan Lomax. Like Coley Jones, Leadbelly recorded a variant of a Child Ballad for a commercial label, but the Musicraft Company, which issued "Gallis Pole," was not a race label; Musicraft catered instead to a white urban intellectual audience. Unlike Jones, whose music stemmed primarily from a single influence, the minstrel stage, Leadbelly provides an almost comprehensive survey of the music of Southern blacks, up to and after the blues.

Leadbelly sang and played folksongs and ballads; prison songs; work songs and field hollers; a few pop, minstrel, and contemporary hillbilly numbers; blues; and his own later compositions, mainly topical songs on civil rights themes. Leadbelly had only a passing and undistinguished encounter with the race market because of the archaic nature of his repertoire and his continuous incarceration during the early period of race recording. The year 1934, when Leadbelly was released from prison for the final time, marked the return to large scale race recording by the commercial companies following the Crash, but the A&R men's approach was radically different from what it had been in the twenties.<sup>24</sup> Most companies could no longer afford to mount the field trips that had resulted in a diverse array of artists playing in all styles, and from this point on they generally concentrated on bringing a small number of "stars" who usually played blues in the newer urban style into their Northern studios.

Between January and March of 1935 Leadbelly had several sessions in New York City for the American Record Corporation, a conglomeration of "dime store" labels that had been instrumental in reviving the race market.<sup>25</sup> Significantly, Leadbelly chiefly recorded blues at his ARC session, but only six of the forty-four titles recorded were eventually issued on various labels.<sup>26</sup> Leadbelly did not record for a commercial company again for four years, until he did a session

for Musicraft, which was really an outgrowth of his work with the Lomaxes, who may even have had a hand in arranging it. Most of Leadbelly's recording took place for the Library of Congress under Lomax supervision; the high proportion of old folk material in his recorded repertoire is certainly a reflection of this. (Leadbelly also showed more of the songster's inclination to play popular material than either his ARC or Library of Congress recordings might indicate.)<sup>27</sup>

Despite his lack of success in the race market, Leadbelly had one of the most prolific and varied careers of any musical performer of his era. Although his career and music almost defy classification, in his early period he was a typical Texas songster, which left a definite imprint on both his repertoire and style. Born near Caddo Lake in eastern Louisiana (ca 1885), Leadbelly migrated first to Shreveport, then to Dallas while he was still fairly young. He lived in or around Dallas from about 1910 to 1917, working as a field hand and picking up on the local music.<sup>28</sup> He and Blind Lemon "ran together" during this period, with Leadbelly playing his mandolin to Blind Lemon's guitar. During this period he also led a serenading group similar to the Dallas String Band with himself as featured instrumentalist playing guitar, mandolin, accordian, mouth harp, and string bass. (There is even the possibility that during this period Leadbelly either knew or played with Coley Jones or some of the Dallas String Band members.) It was also in Dallas that Leadbelly acquired the instrument with which he is now associated and which he would rely on in his later career--the twelve-string guitar. This was the status of Leadbelly's music when he began the first of the prison stretches that ended with his discovery by the Lomaxes.

Leadbelly recorded his version of Child 95 five times before 1942.<sup>29</sup> It was first recorded at a marathon session for the Library of Congress in Wilton, Connecticut, 21 January 1935, a little over six months after his final release from prison. This recording is listed as "The Maid Freed From the Gallows," the title probably supplied by the Lomaxes. This session was by far his most extensive up to this point; on this day Leadbelly recorded seventy-eight selections, comprising the bulk of his repertoire. (In previous Library of Congress sessions, he had recorded only thirty-one with a high proportion of repeats.)

Although in his later career Leadbelly recorded material gathered from a wide variety of sources, including records, books, and even folksong scholars like the Lomaxes, at the time of this Wilton session, Leadbelly still relied primarily on the music he had learned in his youth, and most of the numbers he recorded on this day are probably from traditional sources. He recorded Child 95 again for the Library of Congress nearly three years later in New York City. This performance, listed as "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver," was eventually issued on Leadbelly: The Library of Congress Sessions (Elektra EKL 301/2). Over a year later at his session for

Musicraft he recorded "Gallis Pole" twice; the second take was issued on Musicraft 227 with "The Bourgeois Blues."<sup>30</sup> At this session, held in New York City on 1 April 1939 Leadbelly was in top form, both vocally and instrumentally, and the fine performances he gave on that day--a choice cross-section of folk ballads, blues, dance music, and A-cappella worksongs and hollers--have been reissued numerous times since. Finally, on Friday, 23 August 1940, in Washington, D.C., Leadbelly recorded his rendition of Child 95 one more time for the Library of Congress as "The Gallows Song."

"The Maid Freed From the Gallows" was overwhelmingly the most popular of the Child Ballads in black tradition, where it appears not only as a folksong, but as a *cante-fable*, a folk drama, a dance, and a game. This is the primary Child Ballad treated by Dorothy Scarborough in *On the Trail of Negro Folksongs*.<sup>31</sup> (Scarborough includes a variant from New Orleans, and William Owens also mentions hearing two versions of Child 95 in Negro dialect.)<sup>32</sup> The comprehensive study of the interrelationships between all extant texts and tunes of Child 95 is Eleanor Long's *The Maid and the Hangman*, and her scholarship forms the basis of the following discussion. (In her study, Long devotes special attention to "Gallis Pole.")<sup>33</sup> "Gallis Pole" has been transcribed in *The Lead Belly Song Book* (tune and a partial text).<sup>34</sup> There is also a partial transcription of the text by Russell Ames in "Art in Negro Folksong."<sup>35</sup> "Gallis Pole" comes closest to Coffin's "C" type since the sex of the protagonist is male. Leadbelly's Musicraft text follows:

Father did you bring me any silver?  
 Father did you bring me any gold?  
 What did you bring me dear father  
 To keep me from the Gallis Pole? Yes.  
 What did you? Yes.  
 What did you?  
 What did you bring me  
 To keep me from the Gallis Pole?

(spoken:)

In olden times years ago--when you put a man in prison behind the bars in a jailhouse--if you had fifteen or twenty-five or thirty dollars you can save him from the gallis pole 'cause they're gonna hang him, if he don't bring up a little money. And everybody was come to the jailhouse and the boy was ran up side o' the jail. He was married too. Ask for who brought him something: Father come first, now here come his mother.

Mother did you bring me any silver?  
 Mother did you bring me any gold?  
 What did you bring me dear mother  
 To keep me from the gallis pole? Yes.  
 What did you? Yes.  
 What did you?  
 What did you bring me  
 To keep me from the gallis pole?

Son I brought you some silver.  
 Son I brought you some gold.  
 Son I brought you little everything  
 To keep you from the gallis pole. Yes.  
 I brought it. Yes.  
 I brought it.  
 I brought you  
 To keep you from the gallis pole.

(spoken:)

Here comes his wife--his wife brought him all kinda plow points and ol' trace chains--everything in the world she could to get him out o' this jailhouse.

Wife did you bring me any silver?  
 Wife did you bring me any gold?  
 What did you bring me dear wifey  
 To keep me from the gallis pole? Yes.  
 What did you? Yes.  
 What did you?  
 What did you bring me  
 To keep me from the gallis pole?

(guitar break)

Friends did you bring me any silver?  
 Friends did you bring me any gold?  
 What did you bring me my dear friends  
 To keep me from the gallis pole?

Leadbelly's text provides a perfect example of Long's theory "that ballad singers tend to change few elements at one time, as opposed to ballad composers who introduce massive innovations in text and tune."<sup>36</sup> Despite Leadbelly's massive innovations, "Gallis Pole" still satisfies most of the criteria of her textual group "C." In her discussion of tune, Long describes "Gallis Pole" as "Zersungen...being a 'through-composed' (*Durch-komponiertes*) tune imbedded in a *cante-fable* and sung in the style characteristic of the singer."<sup>37</sup> This assessment is followed by a reference to John A. Lomax's description of Leadbelly's methods for arranging songs. According to Lomax, Leadbelly consciously reworked all of his material to make it distinctively his own and the interpolated narrative was an organic feature of his style, arising from his desire to tell the audience about his songs.<sup>38</sup>

Occasionally, at least, the spoken portion also arose from the prompting of the collector; on "Scottsboro Boys," for example, Alan Lomax asks Leadbelly in mid-performance to expound on the song's theme.<sup>39</sup> The interpolated narrative was already a part of Leadbelly's style, but it was obviously encouraged by the Lomaxes, which raises a question as to their role in the development of "Gallis Pole," especially since their transcriptions bear the notice "words and music by Huddie Ledbetter. Edited with new additional material by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax" (Elektra EKL 301/302). It seems most likely that the "new additional material" was textual, since the score and the performance style are pure Leadbelly.

Long's discussion pertains mainly to the Library of Congress recording "Mama, Did You Bring

"Me Any Silver?" Long notes the unusual sequence of relatives, the mother coming first followed by father, wife, and friend; in "Gallis Pole," however, the more normal sequence of father, mother, wife, and friends occurs, and the friend is compounded. In "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?" "the usual sequence of refusals followed by acquiescence is reversed: all the members of the family offer all they have and only the friend refuses."<sup>40</sup> In "Gallis Pole" only the mother replies at all; there is no response from the father, the wife, or the friends, although the spouse's intentions are obvious. (The burlesque detail of the wife arriving with plow points and trace chains does not occur in "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?") These alterations and omissions are hardly more than circumstantial, however. Neither of these recordings contains the injunction to hangman or judge usually found in Child 95, and the scene is neither the courtroom nor the scaffold, but rather the jailhouse where the prisoner stands looking out through the bars.

One of the most unusual features of "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?"/"Gallis Pole" which has not been remarked as such is the inclusion of a burden. Russell Ames does note that "here [in "Gallis Pole"] repetition is used symmetrically through several stanzas to advance the story; but the stanza, the structure, the phrasing, the background of the scene--all are complete changed."<sup>41</sup> Actually, as Long has demonstrated, the stanza itself does not differ materially from other traditional variants in the same line of transmission. The four-line burden at the end of each stanza is, however, unique. Many British variants of Child 95 contain a "prickly bush" chorus, but Leadbelly's burden is distinctly Afro-American; it makes use of the staggered, repetitious phrasing of the work song which later figured so prominently in most black song forms, including the blues, and there is the rhythmic melodic interplay between the voice and the guitar which is a key feature of country blues (and which may accordingly represent a retention from the older dance style). The text of "Gallis Pole" provides support for what might appear at first to be contradictory assertions: Eleanor Long's theory of minimal change from singers/maximal from creators, and Russel Ames's claim that changes in folksongs "depend not on bold creation but on relationship and arrangement."<sup>42</sup> Even when massive innovations are introduced, these innovations tend to be based on traditional conventions.

As previously noted, the interpolated narrative was an essential feature of Leadbelly's style and with this in mind it would seem that his version of Child 95 has only a coincidental connection to other *cante-fable* variants of Child 95 collected from blacks. The fable section of Leadbelly's version does not maintain the more rigid structure of the traditional *cante-fable*, and a comparison of this section

in "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?" and "Gallis Pole" reveals a great amount of variation, implying that Leadbelly's fable was largely improvised. The progression of titles under which Leadbelly's Child 95 appears is also interesting: "Gallis" is, of course, a phonetic spelling for the Southern black's pronunciation of "gallows," and this phonetic spelling frequently occurs in Afro-American texts of Child 95 in folksong collections (usually spelled "gallus").

On the basis of the mid-cadence (on the fifth) and the final note of the first strain (on the tonic) Eleanor Long places "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?"/"Gallis Pole" in her "IA" tune group: this is the largest group and probably represents the original tune associated with Child 95.<sup>43</sup> This group corresponds roughly to Bronson's "Af" subdivision. Writing on the tunes for Child 95, Bronson states that "plagal forms predominate, and the melodic tradition has remained almost wholly within the Ionian galaxy."<sup>44</sup> "Gallis Pole" satisfies both of these criteria. In Bronson's symbology it should be labeled "p I/M (-II)." (There is a flattened third--accidental--in the burden.) Actually, most of the melody is sung within the compass of a fifth above the tonic. Leadbelly's vocal on this selection is a ringing shout not far removed from the field holler. It is Leadbelly's guitar accompaniment, however, that gives "Gallis Pole" its truly distinctive sound.

Leadbelly was not only multi-instrumental, he was acquainted with a variety of guitar styles and was unquestionably a master of mood. His guitar playing on "Gallis Pole" is not only technically brilliant, it is incredibly suggestive: the churning guitar and its often dissonant relationship to the soaring vocals underline the tension already inherent in the ballad situation and its incremental structure, and a sinister tone pervades this entire performance.

Like most performers of the period, Leadbelly played the guitar with his fingers (primarily the thumb and forefinger). One of the keys to his technique was the use of the thumb-pick. This greatly increased his attack, particularly on the bass strings, and the heavy rhythm of the alternating or droned bass, or the booming runs derived from barrelhouse piano playing are trademarks of his guitar style. The thumb-pick also allowed him to play rapid single note figures which are almost suggestive of modern bluegrass flat-picking. This technique, which is employed on "Gallis Pole," may be an influence from the mandolin; in fact, Leadbelly may have adapted the use of the thumb-pick during his early career as a result of his mandolin playing, since some sort of plectrum, usually either a thumb- or a flat-pick, was nearly always used with this instrument. (Coincidentally, the mandolin, like the twelve string guitar, has paired strings.)

"Gallis Pole" is played in the key of C, standard tuning; variations of the guitar break are also used as an accompaniment for the vocal

sections. The first part of the break is a four strain melody (ABAC), played with the thumb, alternating with brushed chords, which roughly parallels the melody of the stanza, so roughly in fact that when played behind the voice it is almost a counter-melody. The guitar break comes to rest on the IV at mid-cadence, as opposed to the voice which hits the V, and this dissonance at the mid-cadence contributes dramatically to the tension of the performance. The second section of the guitar break (the burden) consists primarily of a rapid single note riff, also played with the thumb, punctuated by a heavily accented offbeat on G on the low E string (V) further building the tension. By snapping the string on this tone, Leadbelly produces a resounding boom, which, positioned thus, is almost startling. (This note falls on the word *yes* in the burden.) For the most part the guitar stays on the tonic chord, although the IV chord is alluded to at mid-cadence and the V chord is implied by a bass run. After the second guitar break a new chord progression is introduced as a break in which the IV chord does occur (I·I·IV·I·IV·I·I). Here the guitar lapses into a more conventional fingerpicking pattern with the index finger sounding the treble strings and the thumb playing an alternating bass.

One of the most striking features of the guitar part on "Gallis Pole" is the strange drone on the A string throughout the performance. During the stanza section of the guitar break, Leadbelly often strikes or brushes the open A string, apparently by accident, at the same time he is picking the melody on the D and G strings. This usually occurs on the downbeat of each melodic strain but it is by no means consistent. The result is a dissonant drone which, when coupled with the interplay of the voice and guitar, is quite eerie. (A would be the tonic for the Aeolian--modern melodic minor--range of the scale.) During the final half of the burden Leadbelly also uses the open A string, quite obviously on purpose this time, as the low tune in the alternating thumb pattern, producing a strange sounding A minor seventh chord, which further contributes to the dark mood of the performance. (This is the strain in which the voice hits the flatted third.) "Gallis Pole" even ends on a dissonant note: the guitar outlines the I<sub>7</sub> chord by striking the tonic (3rd fret A string--an octave below middle C) followed by the flatted (mixolodian) seventh nearly an octave above it (3rd fret G string). Despite its sombre overtones, "Gallis Pole" has much of the feeling of the square dance pieces Leadbelly recorded, what he called *sookey jumps*, and it is not hard to imagine "Gallis Pole," with its shouted vocals, driving rhythm, and snowballing tempo, being used to accompany a country breakdown or play party.

#### "Our Goodman" and "The Maid" in the Groove: Some Conclusions

Writing on Afro-American variants of Child Ballads in 1925, Dorothy Scarborough suggested that:

Doubtless a definite search for this sort of material would show a number of other traditional ballads surviving among the Negroes of the various Southern states, especially of an older civilization. It is an investigation that should be made soon, however, for the old songs are being crowded out of existence by the popularity of phonographs and the radio, which start the Negroes singing other types of song, to the exclusion of the fine old ballads and their own folksongs.<sup>45</sup>

Ironically, her statements were made on the eve of the country blues boom; before the end of the decade a number of commercial companies had unwittingly conducted the search for which Scarborough had called. Had it not been for their activities, Coley Jones's minstrel rendition of Child 274 and a wealth of other older material would not have been preserved. The Depression brought the country era in race recording to a close, but although the next decade marked the emergence of the modern blues, the older music did not entirely disappear. A few of the bluesier string bands, like the Mississippi Sheiks and the Memphis Jug Band, continued to record, and Papa Charlie Jackson, the medicine show banjo player whose recordings had inaugurated the country era, recorded again as late as 1934.

The minstrel influence made a remarkable comeback during the thirties in the form of the "hokum" bands who adapted the old themes to the new urban style, and the old ballads were occasionally refurbished; as previously noted, two of the most popular thirties blues singers, Blind Boy Fuller and Sonny Boy Williamson, recorded versions of "Our Goodman." For the most part, however, the older forms became the realm of the folklorist. The Library of Congress undertook field trips just when most commercial companies were terminating theirs, and researchers like the Lomaxes not only uncovered a great deal of new talent, but they located and recorded many country artists who had been abandoned by the race labels.<sup>46</sup> As later researchers have shown the pre-blues style was preserved by isolated individuals, such as the Texas songster Mance Lipscomb, or even entire communities. The activities of the Musicraft label, which recorded Leadbelly's "sookey jump" version of Child 95, attests to the first stirrings of the urban revival, which would likewise result in the rediscovery of many early country artists.

Although the companies which recorded "Drunkard's Special" and "Gallis Pole" were antithetical in their musical concerns and intended audience, the two recordings studied here reveal a great number of correspondences between artists who at first might seem to be highly dissimilar. Both of these Texas songsters and their arrangements of Child Ballads reflect the diversity of Texas music during the start of the century. Their guitar performances reveal the influence of earlier instrumental styles and demonstrate the

effects of instrumentation upon vocal music. Although Jones and Ledbetter were active in the Texas music scene before the advent of the era of commercial recording, neither was within the mainstream of race music by the time documentation of their careers began.

Intriguingly, each of these ballads merits consideration as a possible part of pre-phonograph commercial traditions which also utilized Southern folk material: the medicine shows and the serenading groups. Although there is, of course, no definite way of knowing how long these artists had known and performed these ballads, it may be significant that both performances are modeled after nineteenth-century forms, the minstrel song and the "sookey jump," and scholars have demonstrated that variants of these ballads were put to just such uses.

In view of the work of Dorothy Scarborough and others there is no reason to assume that either "Drunkard's Special" or "Gallis Pole" has anything but a remote connection to the Anglo-American Child Ballad tradition, even though both of these Afro-American ballads possess remarkable correspondance to their Anglo-American parallels. Obviously, the Afro-American Child Ballads were not solely the province of mammies singing the babies to sleep up in the big house, and there is a distinct possibility that Coley Jones, Leadbelly, and their musical cohorts were performing their interpretations of traditional British ballads for tips in the streets of Dallas during the 'teens, and, possibly, even before that in turn-of-the-century medicine shows, or at sookey jumps in the bottoms surrounding Caddo Lake.

--Austin, Texas

(In connection with this article, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Archie Green, who offered advice and encouragement during all phases of its writing; and Roger deV. Renwick, who read and commented on the initial draft.)

#### NOTES

1. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898: rpt. New York: Dover, 1965), III, 251, 515. The "Little Harry Hughes" (N) text of "Sir Hugh or The Jew's Daughter" (155) is from the singing of a black girl in New York City; and, in the additions and corrections to Volume III, Child publishes a stanza from "Lamkin" (93) with the following explanation: "The Negroes of Dumfries, Prince William County Virginia, have this ballad, orally transmitted from the original Scottish settlers of that region...'They sang it to a monotonous measure' (Mrs. Dulany)."
2. Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folksongs* (1925: rpt. Hatboro, Penn.: Folklore Associates, 1963), pp. 33-64.
3. See Samuel Charters, *The Bluesmen* (New York: Oak, 1967), pp. 163-210; Paul Oliver, *The Story of the Blues* (London: Design Yearbook Ltd., and Philadelphia Chilton Book Co., 1969), pp. 36-41; and Robert M. W. Dixon and John Godrich, *Recording the Blues*, "The Blues Series," ed., Paul Oliver (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), p. 48f.
4. See Paul Oliver, *The Story of the Blues*, pp. 55-57; Robert B. Winans, "The Folk, the Stage and the Five String Banjo in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Folklore*, 89, No. 354 (1976), 423-428; and Bill Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.: A Fifty Year History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), pp. 19-22.
5. Information about the recordings of Coley Jones and the Dallas String Band is drawn primarily from John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, *Blues and Gospel Records: 1902-1942* (London: Storyville, 1969), p. 387.
6. Paul Oliver, *The Blues Tradition* (New York: Oak, 1970), pp. 50-51. Oliver publishes the full text of "The Elder's He's My Man."
7. Quoted from Samuel Charters, *The Country Blues* (1959: rpt. New York: De Capo Press, 1975), pp. 149-150.
8. Ry Cooder, liner notes to *Ry Cooder: Jazz* (Warner Brothers Records, BSK 3197).
9. Paul Oliver defines *hokum* as "a minstrel show term for good-natured guying of simple folkways." *The Story of the Blues*, pp. 100-101.
10. "Drunkard's Special" was reissued on Harry Smith's historic *Anthology of American Folk Music, I: Ballads* (Folkways Records, FA 2951).
11. Tristram Potter Coffin and Roger deV. Renwick, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), pp. 272-273.
12. William A. Owens, *Texas Folk Songs*, 2nd ed. (1950: rpt. Dallas: SMU Press, 1977), p. 29.

13. "Some Child Ballads on Hillbilly Records" in *Folklore and Society: Essays in Honor of Benjamin A. Botkin*, ed. Bruce Jackson (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1966), pp. 121-129. (also reprinted by the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, JEMF Reprint No. 10).
14. Scarborough, p. 61; and Oliver, *The Blues Tradition*, p. 193.
15. Bertrand Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), IV, 115-116.
16. Coffin and deV. Renwick, pp. 272-273.
17. Child, V, 91-92.
18. See McCulloh, pp. 121-129.
19. Bronson, IV, 115-116.
20. Charters, *The Country Blues*, p. 150.
21. Oliver, *The Story of the Blues*, p. 51.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 144
23. Godrich and Dixon, *Blues and Gospel Records*, pp. 132, 743
24. See Robert M.W. Dixon and John Godrich, *Recording the Blues*, pp. 78-97.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.
26. Godrich and Dixon, *Blues and Gospel Records*, pp. 412-413. Some of these unissued sides were finally released on *Leadbelly* (Columbia Records C-30035).
27. John Avery Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folksongs as Sung by Leadbelly* (New York: MacMillan, 1936), p. 52.
28. Leadbelly's activities in Dallas are recounted in Lomax and Lomax, pp. 9-10.
29. Godrich and Dixon, *Blues and Gospel Records*, pp. 414-417.
30. My copy of "Gallis Pole" is on an LP from the Archive of Folk Song, *Leadbelly* (FS 202), one of the various "budget label" subsidiaries of Everest Records. The first side of this record consists of eight songs from the Musicraft session: "The Bourgeois Blues," "Looky, Looky Yonder/Black Betty/Yellow Woman's Doorbells," "Poor Howard/Green Corn," "The Gallis Pole," and "DeKalb Woman." The other sides from this session which were issued were "Fanin Street," "Roberta, Parts 1 and 2," "Ain't Goin' Down to the Well No Mo/Go Down Old Hannah," and "The Boll Weevil." Side two consists of Library of Congress material. It would be interesting to see a discography for reissues of this Musicraft session, since there have been many, and the high quality of these performances has certainly contributed to Leadbelly's reputation.
31. Scarborough, pp. 33-64.
32. Owens, p. 25
33. Eleanor Long, "The Maid" and "The Hangman": *Myth and Tradition in a Popular Ballad*, *Folklore Studies*, 21 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
34. Moses Asch and Alan Lomax, *The Leadbelly Songbook* (New York: Oak, 1962), p. 52.
35. Russell Ames, "Art in Negro Folksong," *Journal of American Folklore*, 56, No. 222 (1943), 242. (Coffin also cites Ames's discussion of "Gallis Pole" in his section on Afro-American variants of Child 95.)
36. Long, p. 77
37. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
38. Lomax and Lomax, p. xii.
39. See "Scottsboro Boys" on *Leadbelly: The Library of Congress Recordings* (Elektra EKL 301/302).
40. Long, p. 50
41. Ames, p. 242.
42. Long, p. 10f.; and Ames, p. 252.
43. Long, pp. 69, 89
44. Bronson, II, 448.
45. Scarborough, p. 64.
46. Dixon and Godrich, *Recording the Blues*, pp. 99-100.

## RECORD REVIEW ESSAY

### THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION OF CLASSIC COUNTRY MUSIC

By Archie Green

[This issue of the JEMFQ marks the beginning of Archie Green's fifteenth year of continuous work on his "Graphics" series; and this year marks Green's retirement from his position at the Folklore Center, University of Texas at Austin. Owing to his retirement and return home to California, the Graphics for this issue is being replaced by Green's extensive review of "The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music." In the tradition of the Graphics series, a number of full-page illustrations has been selected to accompany the review essay. The Graphics series will resume with the next issue of the JEMFQ.]

In mind's eyes, we see the Smithsonian Institution as a red sandstone castle on the National Mall. We know that this castle overlooks other granite- or marble-clad mansions which hold unending rooms. Most contain treasures; some chronicle the past by scroll and broadside; all focus attention on present-day significance in objects such as birch canoe, tattered flag, or moon pebble. In my walks through the Smithsonian labyrinth, I marvel at how often an exhibit (or its neat wall/case cards) directs my thoughts away from bone and bronze, feather and film. Almost physically, the artifact propels me into an interpretive maze. What axe blazes my trail? Why do I enjoy the lines of a Yankee clipper's bow, but avert my eyes when I see Presidential Ladies's gowns displayed? Why do I return constantly to stand by carousel animals, but not to gaze at space capsules?

Writing in Austin rather than Washington, I am grateful that America's major museum willingly mails to every crossroad published catalogs, monographs, magazines, slide kits, and record albums. These gifts figuratively bring the museum to me. I can select carousel carvings in postcards from the Index of American Design, or an ethnographic treatise on Georgia pottery from the Office of Folklife Programs. And, thanks to the efforts of the Division of Performing Arts, I now can hear sound recordings of Blue Ridge farmers, Hollywood screen cowboys, and Nashville honkytonk angels. This aural treasury became available in May, 1981, when the Institution released a boxed eight-LP album, *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music*, edited and annotated by Tulane University historian Bill C. Malone. We have come to expect pride-in-craft from Professor Malone; this set adds luster to his previous achievements.

#### REISSUES

A few discographical details help listeners/readers grasp the collection's full dimensions. The set includes 143 selections: eight instrumentals; three instrumentals with verbal asides; the remainder, 132 accompanied songs. Drawn from 78-, 45-, and 33-rpm discs, the new album, however, holds twenty-three items originally released on 78s which now appear on LP for the first time. The selections have been traced and credited to seventeen "owners," ranging from giant corporations like RCA, CBS, and MCA to specialty firms like County and Old Homestead. To reissue sound

recordings requires a special genius for tracking material in studio vaults and private collections, for ascertaining specific copyright credits, and for untangling company genealogies. Over the years, entrepreneurs have bartered record labels and parallel rights as business properties. Ideally, any song, in time, enters the public domain and belongs to all the citizenry, while a physically labeled disc--or its metal masters and related parts, or its parent tapes--continues to belong to an individual or corporate owner.

In projects of this sort, editors dream of Platonic albums, but cannot always find clean copies of rare discs. Occasionally, artists, such as Waylon Jennings, refuse permission for inclusion of their songs in proposed anthologies. Sometimes, editors obtain rights but collectors or companies fail to meet production deadlines. Fortunately, Malone could call for assistance upon friends at the Country Music Foundation and John Edwards Memorial Foundation, as well as upon private collectors Richard Spottswood and Joe Bussard. Together, these institutions and individuals made possible a strong and comprehensive overview of recorded country music.

We have come to expect well-written and dramatically illustrated brochures to enhance serious record reissues. The Smithsonian rewards purchasers with a handsome 56-page publication, 12" x 12" in size, holding 81 black and white photos--credited to the Country Music Foundation and a handful of individual photographers. Loretta Lynn and Tom T. Hall open with brief down-home testimonials. James R. Morris follows with a concise but valuable page on country music's inner melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic forms, as well as vocal and instrumental performance qualities. He reminds us that past country scholarship--heavily oriented to personality--neglected case studies in musical structure and style.

Professor Malone divides his contribution: 1) a 20-page essay introducing country music as both a commercial and expressive system; 2) a series of rich, self-contained paragraphs on song/singer/style spread through 32 pages and keyed to the set's 143 selections. Valuable discographical information (original recording date and place, label and matrix number, accompanists, credits) heads each entry. The brochure

The Smithsonian Collection of  
**CLASSIC COUNTRY MUSIC**

**1930s**

**Southeast**

**1920s**

1. Sallis Gooden  
Eck Robertson  
Courtesy of RCA Records
2. The Little Old Log Cabin  
in the Lane  
Fiddlin' John Carson  
Courtesy of CBS Records
3. Going Down the Lee  
Highway  
Grayson and Whitter  
Courtesy of RCA Records
4. Jordan Is a Hard Road to  
Travel  
Uncle Dave Macon  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
5. The Prisoner's Song  
Vernon Dalhart  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. Goodbye Sweet Liza  
Jane  
Charlie Poole  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. Wreck of the Old 97  
Vernon Dalhart  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. Soldier's Joy  
Gid Tanner and His  
Skillet Lickers  
Courtesy of CBS Records

**SIDE 2**

1. Shannon Waltz  
Texas Tercenaders  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
2. Birmingham Jail!  
Darby and Tarlton  
Courtesy of CBS Records
3. Lody Gay  
Buell Kazee
4. The Fatal Wedding!  
Bradley Kincaid  
Courtesy of Fantasy  
Records
5. When the Work's All  
Done This Fall  
Carl Sprague  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. The Titanic!  
Ernest V. Stoneman  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. Wildwood Flower  
Carter Family  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. Daddy and Home  
Jimmie Rodgers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
9. Waiting for a Train  
Jimmie Rodgers  
Courtesy of RCA Records

**SIDE 3**

1. Mocking Bird!  
Arthur Smith  
Courtesy of RCA Records
2. Ragged but Right!  
Riley Puckett  
Courtesy of RCA Records
3. Black Jack David  
Cliff Corcoran  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
4. Pretty Polly  
Coon Creek Girls  
Courtesy of CBS Records
5. Twenty One Years!  
Mac and Bob
6. She's My Curley  
Headed Baby  
Callahan Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. The East Bound Train!  
Blue Sky Boys  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. Brown's Ferry Blues  
Delmore Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
9. What Would You Give in  
Exchange?  
Monroe Brothers  
Courtesy of RCA Records

**SIDE 4**

1. Orange Blossom Special  
Rous Brothers  
Courtesy of RCA Records
2. Old Shep!  
Red Foley  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
3. I'm Here to Get My Baby  
Out of Jail!  
Karl and Harry  
Courtesy of CBS Records
4. Remember Me  
Lulu Belle and Scotty  
Courtesy of CBS Records
5. Maple on the Hill  
J. E. Mainer's  
Mountaineers  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. The Last Letter!  
Rex Griffin  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
7. Great Speckled Bird  
Roy Acuff  
Courtesy of CBS Records
8. The Precious Jewel  
Roy Acuff  
Courtesy of CBS Records
9. Can the Circle Be  
Unbroken?  
Carter Family  
Courtesy of CBS Records
10. It Makes No Difference  
Now!  
Cliff Bruner's Texas  
Wanderers  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
11. New Son Antonio Rose  
Bob Wills and his Texas  
Playboys  
Courtesy of CBS Records
12. You Are My Sunshine  
Gene Autry  
Courtesy of CBS Records

**1930s**

**Southwest**

**SIDE 5**

1. Silver Haired Daddy of  
Mine!  
Gene Autry and Jimmy  
Long  
Courtesy of CBS Records
2. Tumbling Tumbleweeds  
Sons of the Pioneers  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
3. Cool Water  
Sons of the Pioneers  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
4. I Want to Be a Cowboy's  
Sweetheart!  
Patsy Montana  
Courtesy of CBS Records
5. Twenty One Years!  
Mac and Bob
6. She's My Curley  
Headed Baby  
Callahan Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. The East Bound Train!  
Blue Sky Boys  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. Brown's Ferry Blues  
Delmore Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
9. What Would You Give in  
Exchange?  
Monroe Brothers  
Courtesy of RCA Records

**SIDE 6**

1. Walking the Floor over  
You  
Ernest Tubb  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
2. When My Blue Moon  
Turns to Gold Again  
Wiley Walker and Gene  
Sullivan  
Courtesy of CBS Records
3. Kentucky  
Blue Sky Boys  
Courtesy of RCA Records
4. There's a Star Spangled  
Banner Waving  
Somewhere  
Elton Britt  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
5. My Swiss Moonlight  
Lullaby  
Montana Slim (Will  
Carter)  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. Pistol Packin' Mama  
Al Dexter  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. Teardrops Falling in the  
Snow  
Molly O'Day  
Courtesy of CBS Records
8. Have I Stayed Away Too  
Long?  
Tex Ritter  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
9. Dust on the Bible!  
Bailes Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
10. Oklahoma Hills  
Jack Guthrie  
Courtesy of Capitol Records

**1941-1953**

1. Walking the Floor over  
You  
Ernest Tubb  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
2. When My Blue Moon  
Turns to Gold Again  
Wiley Walker and Gene  
Sullivan  
Courtesy of CBS Records
3. Kentucky  
Blue Sky Boys  
Courtesy of RCA Records
4. There's a Star Spangled  
Banner Waving  
Somewhere  
Elton Britt  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
5. My Swiss Moonlight  
Lullaby  
Montana Slim (Will  
Carter)  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. Pistol Packin' Mama  
Al Dexter  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. Teardrops Falling in the  
Snow  
Molly O'Day  
Courtesy of CBS Records
8. Have I Stayed Away Too  
Long?  
Tex Ritter  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
9. Dust on the Bible!  
Bailes Brothers  
Courtesy of CBS Records
10. Oklahoma Hills  
Jack Guthrie  
Courtesy of Capitol Records

**SIDE B**

1. Under the Double Eagle  
Bill Boyd  
Courtesy of CBS Records
2. St. Louis Blues  
Milton Brown and his  
Brownies  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
3. Steel Guitar Rag  
Bob Wills and his Texas  
Playboys  
Courtesy of CBS Records
4. Le Vale de Geydan  
Leo Soileau  
Courtesy of RCA Records
5. Smoke, Smoke, Smoke  
Tex Williams  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
6. Da Re Mi  
Woody Guthrie  
Courtesy of RCA Records
7. Take an Old Cold Shower  
Jimmy Dickens  
Courtesy of CBS Records
8. Philadelphia Lawyer  
Maddox Brothers and  
Rose  
Courtesy of Pickwick  
International
9. Peace in the Valley  
Red Foley  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.

**1953-1963**

1. Eight More Miles to  
Louisville  
Grandpa Jones  
Courtesy of Gusto Records
2. Filippo Baby  
Cowboy Copas  
Courtesy of Gusto Records
3. Kentucky  
Blue Sky Boys  
Courtesy of RCA Records
4. New Jole Blon  
Moon Mullican  
Courtesy of Gusto Records
5. Bonanza Waltz!  
Slim Whitman  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
6. I'm Moving On  
Hank Snow  
Courtesy of RCA Records
7. I Love You Because  
Leon Payne  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
8. Sixteen Tons  
Tennessee Ernie Ford  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
9. Dawn in the Willow  
Garden  
Everly Brothers  
Courtesy of Barnaby  
Records
10. Country Gentleman  
Chet Atkins

**SIDE 10**

1. I'm Moving On  
Hank Snow  
Courtesy of RCA Records
2. He'll Have to Go  
Jim Reeves  
Courtesy of RCA Records
3. I Love You Because  
Leon Payne  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
4. Tennessee Waltz  
Pee Wee King  
Courtesy of CBS Records
5. The Tramp on the Street!  
Molly O'Day  
Courtesy of CBS Records
6. I'm Using My Bible for a  
Roadmap  
Ray Price  
Courtesy of CBS Records
7. Rockin' Top  
Osborne Brothers  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
8. City Lights  
Ray Price  
Courtesy of CBS Records
9. I'm Using My Bible for a  
Roadmap  
Reno and Smiley  
Courtesy of Gusto Records
10. When I Stop Dreaming  
Louvin Brothers  
Courtesy of Capitol Records

**Bluegrass**

1. There Stands the Glass  
Webb Pierce  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
2. I Walk the Line  
Johnny Cash  
Courtesy of Shelby  
Singleton Corporation
3. Sixteen Tons  
Tennessee Ernie Ford  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
4. Dawn in the Willow  
Garden  
Everly Brothers  
Courtesy of Barnaby  
Records
5. Country Gentleman  
Chet Atkins
6. I'm Moving On  
Hank Snow  
Courtesy of RCA Records
7. He'll Have to Go  
Jim Reeves  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. I Love You Because  
Leon Payne  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
9. Tennessee Waltz  
Pee Wee King  
Courtesy of CBS Records
10. The Tramp on the Street!  
Molly O'Day  
Courtesy of CBS Records

**1963-1975**

1. Six Days on the Road  
Dave Dudley  
Courtesy of PolyGram  
Corporation
2. Detroit City  
Bobby Bare  
Courtesy of RCA Records
3. Green, Green Grass of  
Home  
Porter Wagoner  
Courtesy of RCA Records
4. King of the Road  
Roger Miller  
Courtesy of PolyGram  
Corporation
5. Is Anybody Going to  
San Antone?  
Charley Pride  
Courtesy of RCA Records
6. Homecoming  
Tom T. Hall  
Courtesy of PolyGram  
Corporation
7. Coot of Many Colors  
Dolly Parton  
Courtesy of RCA Records
8. Hungry Eyes  
Merle Haggard  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
9. Mama Tried  
Merle Haggard  
Courtesy of Capitol Records
10. Waltz Across Texas  
Ernest Tubb  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
11. Cool Miner's Daughter  
Loretta Lynn  
Courtesy of MCA, Inc.
12. D-i-v-o-r-c-e  
Tammy Wynette  
Courtesy of CBS Records
13. The Grand Tour  
George Jones  
Courtesy of CBS Records
14. It Was Always So Easy  
Moe Bandy  
Courtesy of CBS Records
15. Sin City  
Flying Burrito Brothers  
Courtesy of A & M Records
16. Funny How Time Slips  
Away  
Willie Nelson  
Courtesy of RCA Records
17. Blue Eyes Crying in the  
Rain  
Willie Nelson  
Courtesy of CBS Records

<sup>†</sup> First LP issue.

closes with a bibliography--the earliest expository item dates to 1965, a reminder of how recently our scholarship began, and a challenge for fresh exploration along the beckoning path.

Unlike slick albums mechanically titled "The Best Of . . .," Malone did not compile an eight-LP hit parade. He used best sellers, of course, and complemented these chart favorites by placing them in juxtaposition with obscure pieces. Above all, an illuminating intelligence guided his editorial eye and ear. His curiosity about diverse origins, and willingness to probe songs for large meaning around which American mores cluster, have combined to offer value in the best Smithsonian tradition.

#### TEACHER/PREACHER

As I move from the realm of technical description to that of criticism, I forsake stout frying pan for perpetual fire. Professor Malone, by birth, remains a piney-woods Texan deeply familiar with both Holiness-Pentacostal fundamentalism and Southern Populism. Given choice, he prefers hard-edged fare to pablum and kool-aid. Having oriented much of his adult life to telling country music's story, he brings to this set the linked roles of teacher/preacher. His Smithsonian audience will be large, and will perhaps include new converts as well as old sinners. We can expect Malone's gathering to influence collection and criticism for decades to come. Surely, this set represents a benchmark against which future anthologies will be measured.

The editor of an album designed to include folk and popular music can draw only upon a limited number of categories: composer, performer, region, style, theme, chronology. These groupings do not always jell into discrete molds. We know, further, that an album constitutes but a figurative classificatory order. Malone's dominant arranging rule stresses chronological sweep: 1) 1920s, 2) 1930s Southeast, 3) 1930s Southwest, 4) and 5) 1941-1953, 6) 1953-1963, 8) 1963-1975. Disc 7) departs to cover bluegrass, elevated to an autonomous sub-genre within country music. I question this setting apart of one cluster, as well as the necessity for eighteen bluegrass pieces, and feel that fewer such selections could well have been scattered throughout the whole set. All other sub-genres--for example, honkytonk--appear in their appropriate time sequence.

Some reviewers may feel courageous enough to comment on this album's totality. Despite more than five decades of listening, I lack such bravery. Instead of capsule notes touching each song, I ask of Malone's entire set: Does it face squarely matters of definition? What analytic paradigms guided the editor? How well have these worked? In focusing on these questions, I urge other listeners to bring fresh discographical and biographical details to the surface. We assume, in the *JEMF Quarterly*, that empirical digging and conceptual framing go hand in hand.

#### BINS & TAGS

The term *country music* signals various messages, but two dominate: 1) An overarching name for popular songs and styles, stressing rural roots and Southern regional values--European in origin and form, but hybridized by Afro-American modalities; 2) A narrow name for these same songs and styles stressing Nashville's commercial strategies of homogenization and mediation. These dual definitions constantly interplay. While top-40 deejays accept Nashville's tight conventions and labeling bins, serious collectors generally favor broad norms in material and nomenclature.

The phrase *country music*, stretching semantically from pole to pole, embodies stark contradictions. No matter how professional country performers become, and regardless of their relentless march uptown, they cling rhetorically to rural and blue-collar shibboleths tagged *honest*, *natural*, *simple*, *uncomplicated*, or *everyday*. In turn, listeners hear country music favorably or unfavorably depending on economic or esthetic distance from Nashville. One difficulty in switching our basic naming tag from an encompassing to a restrictive device lies in the industry's self-definition of its daily commodity as *mainstream*. In effect, a temporal string of ephemeral songs or flashy performances pre-empts *country*, subordinating time-tested as well as emerging sub-genres. To illustrate: a few years ago, Nashville simultaneously put down "old" bluegrass and new "outlaw" themes in favor of its own "middle-of-the-road" wares. The essential question remains: Is country-pop but a singular part of, or all of, country music?

Professor Malone carefully avoids these semiotic thickets, preferring generous example to definitional enclosure. His set links Buell Kazee, Woody Guthrie, Lily May Ledford, Charley Pride, and Gram Parsons. Do we believe that these singers are all *country* because they appear under the title *Classic Country Music*? As an east-Texas tenant-farm child in the 1930s, young Malone knew *hillbilly* as the proper token for stars as distinct as Bob Wills, Gene Autry, and Roy Acuff. A decade earlier in California, I knew *cowboy* as an equivalent word for radio-beamed cowboy songs as well as for mountain breakdowns, tragic ballads, hobo adventures, and zany novelties. Bill grew up within Southern rural culture; I came to its music from the outside. After Nashville flexed its denominative muscle, both of us eventually learned to accept *country* as a substitute for predecessor words. We need, in the future, to study the transition of the words *hillbilly* and *cowboy* to *country* and *western*, to study the earliest usages of *country music* shorn of *western*, and to study the subsequent world-wide extension of the rubric *country music* to delineate an aspect of American popular culture.

Perhaps Malone's album will call attention

to lexicographic gaps. It opens with Eck Robertson's traditional fiddle tune "Sallie Gooden," and proceeds briskly to minstrel humor, lyric folksongs, topical ballads, and gospel hymns. Originally, all such material reached phonograph record consumers under phrases like *old familiar tunes* or *songs from Dixie*. One must ask: Which 78-rpm disc selected for the Smithsonian set was first actually marketed as a *country song*? When? What does the evidence of phonograph record catalog and trade journal contribute to this matter?

A few enthusiasts may search for dated or printed usages of the word combination *country music*, but other listeners, if so inclined, can conduct aural tests which hone salient definitions and categories implicit in the Smithsonian set. Do all the selections sound uniformly *country*, or do some stand apart as natal songs? Upon listing the album's items in numerical order, 1-143, three songs (45, 52, 57) struck me as marking the discrete country sound which emerged from mountain or western subjects and styles. They are: Jimmie Davis's "Nobody's Darlin' but Mine," 1934; Floyd Tillman's "It Makes No Difference Now" performed by Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers, 1938; Ted Daffan's "Born to Lose," 1942.

Although the first two appeared, respectively, while I was in high school and college, I presently associate these three chestnuts with World War II jukebox music. More specifically, I hear them in mind's ear as broadcast by the Armed Forces Radio Network in the Leyte Gulf and on the Whangpoo River. I cannot say with assurance, now, that I then called these songs anything but *hillbilly*. Today, however, Davis, Bruner, and Daffan represent for me country music's baptismal style. Perhaps, in the future, Malone will write about his earliest understanding of the rubric *country*. It will prove interesting to compare his memories to that of other listeners as they fit his selections to their definitional bins.

#### THESES

I was intrigued to learn that after Bill's oldest brother joined the Navy in 1943, the Malone family moved to town at Tyler, Texas. There, Bill absorbed jukebox favorites: "Born to Lose," "It Makes No Difference Now," "The Last Letter"--"songs whose doleful strains mirrored the loneliness of a society in transition, torn apart by the separations wrought by war" (brochure, page 9). Having already cited two of these pieces as seminal country songs, I call special attention to the mirror metaphor as a clue to the anthology's governing theses.

In briefest outline, Malone treats country music as an evolving commercial institution--almost organic--fusing elements of song, singer, style, and symbol. Within a setting of constant external change, particular song texts mirror (reflect or comment upon) large social forces. Additionally, the best texts pulse to tensions generated by structural polarities within American life: folk/popular, rural/urban, black/white,

sacred/secular, traditional/innovative. Finally, as country singers and songwriters attempt to resolve or contain this tension, they as frequently beget ambivalent statements as they do poetry of firm purpose and clear direction.

To amplify, I both quote from and paraphrase Malone's brochure. He opens with his earliest response to family preferences which "mirrored...much of the musical evolution of southern rural culture" (p. 3). His chronological format enables listeners "to relate the music's growth and development to similar changes in society" (p. 23). Honkytonker Ernest Tubb and mountaineer Roy Acuff represent rungs on a ladder as does Hank Williams, whose "fusion of [their] disparate styles" both reflected and anticipated a "similar synthesis in the larger country field" (p. 11). What does synthesis produce? Songs. In rising, falling, glowing, dimming, they mirror large realities. For example, honkytonk songs still deal with their special domain's allure and danger, but, more importantly, at the start they "dealt with that larger world of the working class. Songs commented as always on work, family, and love in all its manifestations" (p. 11). Such commentary could not escape probing deep fissures in national life. Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family "embodied strongly opposing impulses--the deification of home, and the glorification of the wanderer" (p. 6). For country people "in transition, now urban in residence yet rural in style and outlook, adjustment was often fraught with frustration and pain" (p. 11). Country music, today, remains "beset by opposing tensions which it has never really overcome" (p. 5).

Malone does not condemn evolutionary development for leading to pain as well as pleasure, but, instead, tries to weld the historian's familiarity with institutional progress to the fan's affection for tenant-farm and small-town music. His personal values and academic descriptive power twine in a complex formula (p. 19): Despite resistance by valiants such as Merle Haggard and Loretta Lynn to pollution of country music's wellspring, the urge toward popularization remains irresistible. Hard country stylists appear, then usually venture into lucrative fields. Sometimes, when rewarded, they move back into traditional channels. This ambivalence conforms to a rich industry, uncertain of its audience, and entertainers uncertain of personal identities. Creators have little choice but to hold simultaneously conservative and progressive views. Country composers embody in poetry basic values of flag and hearth, while, equivocally, their songs seek language, chic and mod.

To cap this formulaic construct, I ask when and where Americans have been cheered for clinging to wilderness enclaves, pastoral vistas, Indian mounds, Amish barns, or country codes? Knowing that some citizens honor Ann Pamela Cunningham, John Muir, and Rachel Carson, I suggest that Professor Malone looks to certain



Original Smithsonian Institution building. (photo, courtesy Smithsonian Institution)



Bill C. Malone





Ernest Tubb

BOOK 1

# Elton Britt's

COLLECTION OF FAMOUS RECORDED SONGS

Including "THERE'S A STAR SPANGLED BANNER WAVING SOMEWHERE"

Bluebird Record No. B-9000



BOB MILLER, INC.  
MUSIC PUBLISHER  
1619 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY



The Coon Creek Girls

# Hank Williams'



*Acuff-Rose*  
PUBLICATIONS  
2510 FRANKLIN ROAD  
NASHVILLE 4, TENNESSEE



BUELL KAZEE

1928

country performers as cultural conservationists-preservationists. He is heartened to hear bluegrassers Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice's plaintive "Bury Me Beneath the Willow" in stereo, and similarly encouraged when current artists like Moe Bandy sing "with the clear, hard-edged tones of the classic honky tonk performers" (p. 22). In effect, Skaggs, Bandy, and their compatriots carry the heavy burden of positioning country music's ladder so that it leads to resolution of stress inherent in national commitment to growth and power.

#### PENTACLE

Five words fly as pennants to display Malone's conceptual orientation: fusion, mirror, opposition, tension, ambivalence. Each requires special analysis. In citing his language directly and extending it, in my own manner, I have reduced schematically a full introductory brochure as well as an anthology's wide choices. I am reminded of the cynic who cobbled a perfect country song about Mom, prison, truck, train, rain, and death. Does anyone wish to compose a ballad linking Malone's abstractions? A serious question remains which some listeners may wish to articulate formally: Does his pentacle hold together? I answer cheerfully, "Yes," but add a few nagging qualifications. To begin, Malone's explanatory principles, which come largely from the realm of physics--how matter coheres, how forces balance--follow and hinge upon problematic notions of evolution, borrowed from biology and sister life sciences. Further, Malone's affection for tested or rooted styles at times leads him to devolutionary formulations. As a student of history he is fascinated by country music's endless development; as an enthusiast he judges much of this "growth" to be bleak. In short, Nashville's ladder leads up and down.

Fortunately, Malone handles the evolutionary principle wisely by rejecting its automatic linkage to Victorian rectitude and contemporary jet-set ostentation. Are we to see country music as birthing a unitary national melody, best suited for skyscraper elevators and shopping-mall promenades? Is Nashville's purpose that of constructing guitar-shaped swimming pools for stars, and transferring wealth to Malibu Beach cottages? Malone does not apply the term *evolution*--often embedded with optimistic rhetoric--to biography or song, but, rather, he brings it to play on the unfolding of style and genre within a market economy. That country music has shifted within the Smithsonian set's time-span, 1922-1975, is obvious. In sum, the set challenges each listener to note change-through-time, unencumbered either by evolutionary or devolutionary dogma.

Because country music has sold itself as immediately gratifying, many of its fans feel its importance but have not been prepared to probe its dynamics. Many enthusiasts are more interested in the ebb and flow of an artist's fortune, or the rise and fall of a chart hit, than in Nashville's commercial expansion. In short, the term *evolution*, if used at all, should apply

to singer and song as well as the largest context for each.

Perhaps, reference to a single song will focus attention on the complexity of change in country music. Cliff Carlisle's "Black Jack David," the album's second oldest song, calls attention to variation as explicator. Carlisle learned this piece about 1938 directly from T. Texas Tyler (born David Myrick near Mena, Arkansas). Arlo Guthrie's recent recording stems back to his father, Woody. Ultimately, all country singers who know "Black Jack David" bring to life "The Gypsie Laddie," a fascinating ballad from Scotland three centuries old.

The Scottish narrative concerns love across the barrier of class and ethnicity. In the basic story of a young lady running away from her lord and castle, we hear echoes of dark fairies who cast spells to abduct mortals, as well as disturbing undertones of sexual repression and sublimated liberation. We can no longer ascertain all that the song meant to Carlisle, but we can use his "Black Jack David"--sloughing off enchantment and bypassing anxiety--as an entry into a maze of change. Whether we judge Carlisle's sprightly text esthetically inferior or superior to other printed texts and field recordings, whether or not it has evolved or devolved, his hillbilly song remains a self-contained bead on a bright necklace of artistic expression. We hope that the single ballad, exemplified here, helps limit *evolution* to a descriptive rather than a prescriptive term.

Within Malone's five-pointed star words, he uses *fusion* properly as an explanatory cover for the combination and modification of diverse styles and genres which have met over the years within country music. His image, drawn from physical science, suggests a crucible in which raw ore and powerful alloys fuse into a metal of strength and beauty. For the acculturative process, anthropologists substitute for *fusion* such terms as *assimilation*, *convergence*, and *syncretism*. Elsewhere, we need to trace the movement of conceptual keys from literary criticism and ethnographic folklore to country-music history.

The most difficult concept employed by Malone concerns song-as-reflection-of-reality. Because the notion that a work of art mirrors national life or a people's spirit is older than European ballad scholarship, it has become nearly impossible to discuss popular song without invoking some type of reflective mechanism. I accept Malone's figure, but caution that fun-house mirrors turn us into grotesques. We aid comprehension by hearing songs either as clear or distorted reflections of reality. Further, even with perfect reflection, we must question the nature of the external realm upon which a song comments. Hence, I would modify Malone's abstraction to encompass three globes of reality: A) Some songs denote observed event and movement, employing empirical rhetoric. B) Others reveal a configuration of esthetic or

ethical rules for man and nature, calling upon language which mingles fact and symbol. C) Still others connote hidden emotion and bedrock belief, often expressing thought obliquely or metaphorically.

Three songs serve to illustrate this extension of Malone's mirror notion: "Wreck of the Old 97," "The Last Letter," and "Great Speckled Bird." Vernon Dalhart's 1924 recording of the "Wreck of the Old 97" describes a specific event--a Southern Railway mail train jumped a trestle near Danville, Virginia, on 27 September 1903, killing engineer Broady and others. The ballad behaves like a snapshot, coroner's report, journalist's dispatch, or television newscast. We expect surface narratives to be open and factual. Despite an homiletic ending, this denotative ballad does not lead us to question its essential truth. Indeed, it has led rail buffs, over the years, to corroborate its history.

Rex Griffin, in 1937, composed and recorded "The Last Letter," a song of unrequited love. I have already noted that Malone learned this jukebox favorite about 1943, suggesting in his brochure notes that it mirrored loneliness within a wartorn nation. Specifically, he identified it as "a song of suicidal impulse" (p. 30). However, the text describes neither a war scene nor an act of suicide, but does reveal a flawed love affair or dissolving marriage. In subject and rhetoric, "The Last Letter" is continuous with many teary ballads of romance-turned-to-ashes, sung by Bradley Kincaid and other hillbilly artists. The lines, "I cannot offer you diamonds and mansions so fine/I cannot offer you clothes that your young body craves," require decoding. Is the composer anguished alone by economic poverty, or does he rationalize amatory failure by invoking a rule of material abundance? This narcissistic song marks a conventional view of marriage, for songs which commodify love are not unusual. However, Griffin's letter is more a commentary on social codes than a diary account of a broken relationship.

Roy Acuff recorded the "Great Speckled Bird" at his first Okeh-Vocalion session in Chicago, 1936, indicating that he had learned it previously in Knoxville from broadcasts by a Black Shirts group. (Was this an anti-New Deal, fascist organization?) Publisher M. M. Cole, in a 1937 copyright registration, credits the text to Reverend Guy Smith. This formal claim does not diminish the song's traditionality, for Vance Randolph heard Ozark brush-arbor evangelists date it back to the turn of the century. Clearly, some listeners accept this song's title literally; however, most know that it does not paint an ornithological picture. They sense its mystery and relate it back to the Old Testament's Jeremiah, as well as to the time of Roman persecution of Christians. The terms *mirror* and *reflection* are inutile to explicate a symbolic song. Is the speckled bird a metaphor for a particular Holy Roller church, for an entire sect, or for all Christendom? If the bird, meek and despised,

serves as an institutional symbol, do we understand its sole task as a descent to carry a believer to Jesus? Frequently, fundamentalists, with literal interpretation of the Bible, have a better sense of metaphor than scholars wedded to empiricism.

"The Great Speckled Bird" demands an elaborate study centered on meaning. Here, I refer to it to expand Malone's usage *reflection* to encompass a web of sign, signifier, symbol, emblem, archetype, and unconscious association. Accepting the notion that songs mirror reality at many levels and under varied lights, we are led, ultimately, to ask connected questions about artistic creativity as well as about the nature of knowledge. How do writers externalize feelings and beliefs? What realities do they see, sense, and know? What brings listeners to internalize songs which then express, for them, fact and fiction? Beyond using Malone's mirror to touch these matters, we might also raise again the questions, Can poetry reflect external reality? How?

I do not know how many thousand country songs Professor Malone has absorbed since childhood, nor how many he has liked well enough to pull into his own performing repertoire. Clearly, some of the Smithsonian set's numbers hold great meaning for him. Over the years, these songs have helped define his personal consciousness and, as well, helped him bring order to the chaotic world.

Perhaps the best feature of Malone's brochure lies in its warm reminiscent style. He opens with respect for his mother who taught Bill and his brothers their first songs, carried them to church, and encouraged them in chording the guitar. In retrospect, Malone suggests that his father's "penchant for merriment" had been dampened by the frustrations of cotton farming and by marriage to a Pentacostal bride. I stress these details, partly, because they replicate the experience of other southerners, and, partly, because Malone built upon earliest family memory for his understanding of American polarity and tension. The Malones were white, not black; poor, not rich; rural, not urban; sectarian, not mainstream, in denomination. Even before Bill comprehended the large cultural world which enveloped him, he "could dimly perceive that some people thought [his sphere] was both different and inferior" (p. 3). Need one make the analogy to immigrant children in city ghettos?

Malone's use of the concept of oppositional forces as governing country music development and individual song creation is especially strong. From the beginning, hillbilly music "repelled and attracted" rural folk dislocated by change (p. 5). Some fled eroded fields or the boll weevil's ravages; others, enchanted by New South ballyhoo, entered mine and mill; still others rode out of hamlet one step ahead of the law. But some remained in the backwoods--to

~~fellow~~ the sun's rhythm, to celebrate cycles of birth and death, to frail the banjo, to whittle on courthouse steps. Folk, hillbilly, and country music together spoke to Americans who stayed behind, and to those who left decaying cabins only to decorate them in memory. Today, with so many country songs set in bedroom (motel or condo), it is difficult to recall that they had once been centered in honkytonk, and, before that, in the parlor.

Although Professor Malone never invokes the name of the French structural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, the Smithsonian set is shaped by this savant's formula of binary opposition. Malone finds the polarity of home/road fruitful as a generating and patterning force in country music. The home encircles its members and moderates their desires; the road tempts and tarnishes those who wander. Here, we need not extend Malone's use of linked opposition as an analytic tool, but each listener can select confirming song pairs. For example: "Where We'll Never Grow Old" depicts the heavenly family circle, while "The Grand Tour," in soap-opera rhetoric, touches family dissolution. "When the Work's All Done This Fall" narrates a working cowboy's death in a stampede, while "Texas Plains" nostalgically recalls the home range from Hollywood's perspective. In "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap," the talisman is obviously righteous, while "There Stands the Glass," and its many barroom counterparts, points in an opposite direction.

As the works of an historian, Malone's books have touched tensions within large national arenas: Yankee/Rebel, populism/mercantilism, segregationist/integrationist, conservation/development. Fortunately, he has not had to expand the Smithsonian booklet to provide case studies for individual selections. I accept Malone's view that country music as an institution is charged by American currents of high tension, but curiously, very few of his songs arise out of those conflicts which preoccupy historians. Four songs appropriate as illustrations for history books are: Charlie Moore, "The Legend of the Rebel Soldier" (Civil War); Elton Britt, "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere" (World War II); Woody Guthrie, "Do Re Mi" (Dust Bowl migration to California); Bobby Bare, "Detroit City" (southern migration to northern industry).

For the most part, the Smithsonian album's songs overlook war-or-depression-tension in favor of glandular torment. Even the most casual listener knows that the domain of love rules country music--love unrequited, unrealized, unappreciated. In traditional murder ballads such as "Pretty Polly" by the Coon Creek Girls, or "The Knoxville Girl" by the Louvin Brothers, the opposition between men and women is dissolved brutally and tragically. But most country heart-songs neither dissolve nor transcend tension. Instead they bring into conjunction fragile souls who cheat, ache, sob, whimper, wail, moan, and continue to cheat. Men wrong women; women wrong men; both pull their partners

into bottomless pits. George Jones and Melba Montgomery, in their duet, "We Must Have Been Out of Our Minds," refreshingly reverse direction. They rebound after having rejected each other in favor of false lovers. Sagely, George and Melba forgive and forget their mutual errors by "reaping together the wild seeds they've sown." Only poetic license permits one to reap seeds.

I have suggested that Levi-Strauss stood adroitly at Professor Malone's editorial shoulder in this anthology. Hopefully, Sigmund Freud, wherever he rests, has a few hours free to ponder *Classic Country Music*. Surely, he has something to say about the state of grace engendered by shackled hearts, tigers in jeans, bubbles in beer, and reaped seeds.

In noting Malone's guiding principles, I am drawn to his view that country composers and performers build ambivalence into all their structures--foundations and towers alike. In their music they grind out many songs which never unite internal conflicting images, and a few which direct ethical clash into commanding statements on the human condition. Malone does not shy away from complexity in detailing Nashville's thrust to mainstream status, nor its price in discord. Essentially, the "passion for the crossover hit...the major phenomenon of country music in our time," (p. 17) becomes a normal business strategy to shear situational conflict of its terror.

The word *ambivalence*, in scientific disciplines, describes an elemental unit with the capacity for more than one combining power. In everyday speech we borrow it to describe persons unable to choose paths or cross bridges. When Malone hears country-pop as diluted or compromised, when he fears for his music's extinction, he responds to but one aspect of American ambivalence. Country music made palatable to a wide audience, if it retains any bite, requires the taste of okra and grits. Accordingly, *ambivalence* acquires fresh meaning when it encompasses great artistry. For example, we appreciate Willie Nelson's ability to hold old audiences with Jordan's hymns and new audiences with songs of whiskey rivers. Malone lauds Nelson's subtlety and versatility, picturing him with pony-tail and in jogging shoes, while he spans musical and cultural barriers. Country music's best singers do cross over earth fissure and sea trough.

#### LACKS

Malone's key principles prove useful, but they do not account for several puzzling lacks. By deliberately presenting selections chronologically (with some reference to region, and one departure to a sub-genre), Malone underplays the useful category, theme. No single subject can dominate any LP side. We enjoy hearing country publicists describe their music colloquially, "telling it like it is," but what does a country composition tell? What discourse dominates texts? Do country songs always elucidate surface

topics? Do bluegrass, honkytonk, and western swing share themes across the style-line?

Few scholars agree on classificatory bins for ballads and blues, lullabies and shanties, psalms and reels. Over the years we have used various song taxonomies such as Romantic-Tragic-Magic, or Love-Work-Play, or Location-Occasion-Persuasion. Yet some folksong enthusiasts remain unconvinced that classification serves any useful purpose. I do not imply that the act of dropping a song into a labeled bin alone reveals its implicit meaning. However, labeling serves as an indispensable beginning step for those who wish to gain autonomy in cultural life. In effect, one talks back to tube and transistor by tagging and tabulating, if these acts precede thoughtful interpretation.

I am curious to learn how Malone identified the subjects of his chosen selections. Did he categorize each song within his chronological sweep? To illustrate: Why do we hear six train pieces, but none from oil field or textile mill? If country music mirrors a rural past, why does this album not hold any songs about farmers at work, farmers raising spirits in populist anthem, or farmers complaining about hard times? Where is the young man who wouldn't hoe corn, the black land-farmer, or the hired hand in California's cotton fields? We sense constant nostalgia for a rural past in hits such as "Green, Green Grass of Home." We enjoy Porter Wagoner's "sincerity" in returning to the old home place, but we do not hear the creak of a wooden plow, or, for that matter, the whir of a diesel combine.

Although Professor Malone knows first hand the politics of the South, his album slights polemical songs--those specific to candidates and campaigns, and those concerning large causes debated in the public arena. Fiddlin' John Carson ran the gamut in "Georgia Three Dollar Tag," "Tom Watson Special," and "The Farmer Is the Man That Feeds Them All." Over the years we have heard recorded stump speeches, Klan homilies, prohibition humor, corruption exposes, New Deal alphabet-agency blues, Green Beret praise, tax complaints, and fine restatements of Jeffersonianism. Within close memory, country singers have excoriated the Ayatollah Khomeini or questioned President Carter's handling of the hostage crisis. Iranian events fall beyond Malone's time line, but plenty else remains. It can be argued that the historical pieces on war and internal migration, cited above, are political. Nevertheless, this set needs a few direct references to Huey Long, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, or John Kennedy. Just as Malone touched the widest variety of moral concern in hymnody, he could have deepened the anthology by adding parallel issues: relief, welfare, civil rights, unemployment, atomic energy, regionalism. Songs on these topics exist, but they do not usually live to become chart toppers. Pointedly, they round out country music's infatuation with Cupid's arrows.

The rounder's turn to ribald expression con-

stitutes a third area skirted in the Smithsonian set. Bob and Joe Shelton carry us to Dallas's sin street in "Deep Elem Blues," but only to peek into barrelhouse and brothel. Editors who have reissued race records on LPs have been far more comfortable than hillbilly collectors in treating suggestive song. Hence, the disproportion between white and black "party" discs, itself, demands explication elsewhere. We need to hear ditties such as the Allen Brothers's "Salty Dog Blues," Roy Acuff's "Bang Away Lulu," or the Prairie Ramblers's "Sweet Violets" as one among plural resolutions to ambiguity in faded love, or gauche conduct in courtship. An explicit text often functions as the other side of the coin to a murdered-girl ballad. We can place many current effusions of top-forty country pornographers in perspective by hearing something of traditional erotic material, long known to mountain and cowboy singers.

A constant theme of alienation streams through country music, underground and at the surface. Malone knows that his music resonates to "suffering inherent in the human condition" (p. 19), but he does not fall back on alienation as a guiding term, derived either from Freudian or Marxist analysis. We know that country songs, in overwhelming numbers, concern slipping around and cheating schemes. These deal largely with unloved individuals, but, here, I focus upon men and women beset by other losses--those for whom the times are always out of joint.

Some country people have been driven to the margins of their communities, where unable to cope with convention, they have been repelled by proffered help of kin, friends, or the state's servants. We recall that when bluesmen Robert Johnson or Sleepy John Estes invoked "hellhounds on my trail," or "rats in my kitchen," they borrowed striking proverbial metaphors or created new ones to express deep estrangement. In contrast, Hank Williams's "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" links a series of worn images: night train whistle, crying moon, weeping robin, dying leaves, fallen stars. These ask of his departed lover, "I wonder where you are." I trust it is not sacrilegious to suggest that Hank's loneliness poured out of a well much deeper than lost love, and that many of his listeners seized upon this complaint to exorcise their own private demons.

I dwell, here, on the distinction between melancholy love songs and blues or ballads which depict human fate as inexorable. We differ in naming our hellhounds: Class conscious partisans assert their alienation from the tools and wealth of production. Others, who respond to an inner compass, stress guilt which accompanies failure to turn with the maturational cycle. Many resort to a superorganic avenging power which punishes those who breech commandments. Country composers have fallen back on these diverse passports to rationalize life's journey. It would be stimulating to study the Smithsonian's selections in terms of socioeconomic, psychological, and the-

ological explanations for the losing card, time's slipping away, teardrops in snow, heartaches by the numbers, and mama's hungry eyes.

Listeners who wish to explore this terrain will find useful Malone's note on Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colors." He observes that some tributes to parents also comment "perceptively on the struggles made by working folk to preserve family solidarity in the face of poverty or social change" (p. 20). Dolly's song, with Biblical imagery, underscores her deserved stardom. More importantly, it also dissolves the anxieties of listeners born at the bottom. Clearly, Ms. Parton was not predestined to despair; we hear her upbeat text as a mature response to impersonal and disintegrative power.

The album ends with two Willie Nelson gems, appropriately clad in somber cloaks, "Funny How Time Slips Away" and "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain." These are preceded by the Flying Burrito Brothers's "Sin City." Malone cites "this deliberately oblique song, with its apocalyptic California vision," as an example of the new sub-genre, country rock. He sees it also within the context of country music's absorption of some elements of "youth culture" during the 1960s and 1970s. I have no quarrel with such analysis, but confess that the text of "Sin City" is so opaque that I can follow neither its narrative nor evocative thread. By contrast, Peter Rowan's "Lonesome L.A. Cowboy," performed by the New Riders of the Purple Sage in 1973, represents raw and open disorientation. Off the range, the blue-jeaned intellectual trails poetry, not dogies. This "cowboy" is as marginal as any wrangler, a century ago, wasted in an Abilene saloon. I would have been pleased had Malone included Rowan's song, as well as items by Kris Kristofferson, John Prine, or Kinky Friedman about lost souls--songs crafted in the manner of Mark Rothko or Jackson Pollock.

In suggesting that Malone might have enriched his album's range by altering thematic proportions (lovesickness down, marginality up), I stress not only a detail of category, but also the question of future direction. In the brochure's conclusion, Malone salutes country music for giving poor boys and girls stepping stones out of arid fields and squalid workshops. As these youngsters move ahead, he hopes fervently that "the country music industry will not let the wellsprings of tradition run dry" (p. 22). Whose tradition? Much of Nashville's purpose is precisely to sanitize or nationalize folk and local culture. However, "holdouts" (for example, Merle Haggard and Loretta Lynn) gather strength, in great measure, from their recollection of life at the edge. I assume that tension will always exist between creative artists and the institutions which package culture as well as broker sovereignty. Because country music is officially patriotic and optimistic, the industry's moguls cannot be comfortable with anarchic or apocalyptic poetry. To sell packaged music or to mainstream it, by definition, jumbles matters of ideology. We are right to seek symmetry in country music; we should not

be surprised by its absence.

I return to the dualism (overarching/restricting) within my opening definition for *country music*. So long as this word combination functions across boundaries, it must engage contradiction. We cannot deny Nashville's plasticity nor profitability, but we can continue to unriddle Kenny Baker's dazzling fiddling for "Jerusalem Ridge," or Tom T. Hall's allegorical sight for "Homecoming." In deciphering song, we hear arresting verbal images as we see red and green flashing lights. Ideally, hearing and seeing coalesce into "readings" which demystify texts. We know that satin sheets symbolize hedonistic desire as well as moral destruction. A pitchfork upon a country inn's signboard invites the folk to sojourn; a pitchfork on a Hieronymus Bosch canvas becomes a sign of prodded souls. Country music's finest creators have always understood satin sheets and pitchforks, trucks and trains, or neon lights and barstools as keys to the sundering of personality and community.

In 1937, North Carolina "linthead" Dorsey Dixon, viewing a roadside auto wreck, transcended its commonality. With penetrating vision he saw whiskey and blood run together, and composed "I Didn't Hear Nobody Pray." (Later, Roy Acuff retitled it literally, "Wreck on the Highway.") Dixon was convinced that broken glass (whiskey bottle or car windshield) marked man's alienation from God's path. About 1972, Guy Clark composed "L.A. Freeway," nominally a happy song about leaving that metropolis for a return to open land. Within its refrain he expressed a haunting fear of not getting off the highway alive. I hear Clark's poetry as an ominous response to the freeway-deathway which, metaphorically, encircles man. Also, I hear it as continuous with both Dixon's certitude and anxiety. The road, itself, from East Rockingham to Los Angeles, measures one country music pilgrimage.

My concluding reference to "Wreck on the Highway" and "L.A. Freeway," two selections not found on the Smithsonian set, cannot detract from the anthology's large worth. No listener faces 143 items without dreaming of alternates. I would add a few farm reports to mark country weather, some didactic messages to map the polity within which country music prospers, and a few bawdy pieces to spice the pudding. Further, I would explicate the theme of alienation to distinguish existential despair from tacky affair.

#### AURAL GIFT

Listeners of different experience and station attracted to the Smithsonian country album will not hear it as I do. Each person, in time, adopts that critical stance which integrates diverse styles and significations, or which peels back hidden layers of substance. The prime question, underlying my review, asks whether or not a chronological-evolutionary sweep is best suited to disclose salients of opposition and alienation, tension and fusion. Eventually, a

published gathering, similar to Malone's LP choices, which brings together paradigmatic case studies about country-music questions (origin, form, use, meaning) will test his basic conceptual tools.

The set's oldest song "Lady Gay," performed by Buell Kazee, recalls an Anglo-Celtic past, when revenants returned from the grave to lament mortal transgression. While penning this review, I have been helped by modern country songs (about desperados waiting for trains or musicians harried in airports) to reach back to "Lady Gay's" ghostly children. Are not country music's drifters and losers also ghosts at society's outposts? Malone calls for country music to remain vital by touching and honoring its deepest roots--not only those in the rural South, but those also in European and

African soil. I call upon it, as well, to deal with modernity's challenge--disharmony with nature, tearing of community fabric, human anomie.

To laud Professor Malone's first edited record album in the *JEMF Quarterly* is to reintroduce him to old friends and fellow workers. We have been enlightened by his previous books; we hear these eight LPs of *Classic Country Music* as a harbinger for fresh work to come. I close with thanks to the Smithsonian Institution for its initial country anthology. The set has transported me back to Washington castles where I have long wandered among carousel animals, clipper ship models, buckskin amulets, New Deal lithographs, and antique musical instruments. I salute our national museum for this complementary and provocative aural gift.

--Folklore Center  
University of Texas at Austin

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL SALE OF SELECTED JEMF ITEMS---See page 102

### JEMF LP#102 REMASTERED

In order to raise the sound quality of the recordings on JEMF LP#102, *The Sons of the Pioneers*, it has been remastered using the best discs available. JEMF 102 consists of recordings taken from electrical transcription discs made in 1940, and have not previously been released for commercial sale. As a limited number have been pressed, JEMF is selling this LP to individuals only. Members, \$6.00 + \$1.00 postage and handling; non-members, \$8.98 + \$1.00 postage and handling. (California residents add 6 1/2% sales tax.)

### LUCKY U RANCH (AFM 701) AVAILABLE AGAIN FROM JEMF

The Lucky U Ranch LP consists of selections taken from the Lucky U Ranch radio broadcasts, 1951-1953 of the Sons of the Pioneers; and has back-jacket liner notes by Merle Travis. A limited quantity has been pressed, therefore this double-album is available to individuals only. \$10.98 + \$1.00 postage and handling. (California residents add 6 1/2% sales tax.) (There is no member discount on this LP.)

### NEW JEMF LP ISSUED

*MINSTRELS AND TUNESMITHS: THE COMMERCIAL ROOTS OF EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC* (JEMF 109). Seventeen selections which consist of early recordings (1902-1923) from minstrel shows, Vaudeville, ragtime, blues, jazz, Tin Pan Alley sentimental balladry, and hymnody and gospel music, both black and white. Norm Cohen, in an illustrated 35-page booklet, demonstrates how these tunes, and others like them, are important antecedents to hillbilly music. Also included are notes and discographic information for each selection. Members, \$6.00 + \$1.00 postage and handling; non-members, \$8.98 + \$1.00 postage and handling. (Calif. residents add 6 1/2% sales tax.)

### NEW AFM LP ISSUED

*THE ORIGINAL PIONEER TRIO SINGS SONGS OF THE HILLS AND PLAINS* (AFM 731). Sixteen selections taken from the transcription discs the Pioneers recorded for Standard Radio in 1934-35. The recordings feature the original singing trio of Bob Nolan, Roy Rogers, and Tim Spencer, and the music of Hugh and Karl Farr. An illustrated 16-page booklet by Linda L. Painter includes background material on the Sons of the Pioneers, a history of Standard Radio Trnascription Company, as well as notes and discographic information for each selection. \$8.98 + \$1.00 postage and handling. (Calif. residents add 6 1/2% sales tax.) (There is no member discount for this LP.)

"WE HAD TO BE DIFFERENT TO SURVIVE" --  
BILLY CARRIER REMEMBERS THE SWANEE RIVER BOYS

By Wayne W. Daniel

Although their musical roots were firmly implanted in the tradition of white Southern gospel music, the Swanee River Boys quartet, early on, discovered that they would have to do something different in order to attract a radio and stage show following of sufficient size to allow them to continue as full-time professional musicians. Speaking of the early days of their career, Billy Carrier, the group's guitarist and baritone singer, says, "There were six gospel quartets operating out of Chattanooga [birthplace of the Swanee River Boys] at the time, and we knew we had to be different to survive."<sup>1</sup> What they did to make their shows different was to add to their repertoire of standard gospel songs a generous helping of traditional folk songs, Negro spirituals, western songs of the type made popular by the Sons of the Pioneers, and a smattering of what Carrier calls popular ballads. "By diversifying," Carrier adds, "we were able to put together a variety of programs ranging from an all gospel show that we could present in a church to a variety show with a lot of secular material that was suitable for a school auditorium."

The commercialization of gospel music was coming into its maturity when the individuals who would become known as the Swanee River Boys appeared on the scene. In different parts of the country the individuals who composed the original group grew up in environments that were rich in the white gospel music tradition.

Billy Carrier was born near Arthur, Kentucky, on 16 June 1913. His parents, James I. and Harriet E. Tunks Carrier, were both musicians. The elder Carrier played guitar, five-string banjo, and harmonica; Mrs. Carrier played the organ. Other members of the family were also musicians, with the result that, as Billy Carrier's younger brother, Cotton, himself a professional musician, put it, "Somebody was always picking on something" around the Carrier household.<sup>2</sup>

When Billy Carrier was four years old his father gave up the operation of a country store just outside of Arthur, and the family moved to a farm about four miles from Brownsville, Kentucky. The Carriers raised tobacco, hay, and corn on their farm, with Billy doing his share of the work as he grew older.

Carrier attended a Baptist church with his parents and the music to which he was exposed, Sunday after Sunday, did not fall on deaf ears.

By the time he was five years old Billy was showing a decided interest in music, and when, at the age of fifteen, he started playing the guitar, gospel music constituted a significant proportion of his repertoire.

In 1936, when he was twenty-three years old, Carrier, who had continued to work on the farm with his father after graduating from Brownsville High School in 1933, went to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, to attend the James D. Vaughan School of Music. Classes began on the first Monday in January each year and lasted for six weeks. He returned to Lawrenceburg in the winters of 1937 and 1938 to continue his music education. Between school sessions he worked in a grocery store in Brownsville during the day and taught singing schools in various communities in the county at night. Usually held in a church, these singing schools lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours each evening, Monday through Friday. During this time Carrier also was singing with "weekend quartets" who performed at singing conventions in nearby churches on Sundays.

In October of 1938, Billy Carrier met an Alabaman named Stacy Abner who also was a graduate of the Vaughan School of Music. The two formed a quartet that was soon heard on WNOX in Knoxville, Tennessee. Known as the Vaughan Four, this quartet also made personal appearances in the area. "Our source of income was personal appearances," Carrier notes. "We had an early morning fifteen-minute program on WNOX, and at one time we also had a commercial program on Lowell Blanchard's Mid-Day Merry-Go-Round. Archie Campbell, star of television's "Hee Haw" show, and the Carlisles were on the "Merry-Go-Round" at the time. "We were strictly a gospel quartet," Carrier emphasizes.

At the end of 1938 two of Stacy Abner's nephews, brothers Merle and Buford Abner of Wedowee, Alabama, became members of the Vaughan Four. The quartet now consisted of Billy Carrier, baritone and guitarist; Stacy Abner, high tenor; Buford Abner, lead; Merle Abner, bass and, for a while, a piano player.

The Abner brothers brought to the group additional experience in gospel music. Native Alabamans (Merle was born 25 April 1913 in Wedowee, and Buford on 10 November 1917 in Lineville), they had grown up in a musical family. As children they had teamed with another brother, Jasper,

to form a gospel singing trio. Later, in 1928 and in 1929, Buford, Merle, and one of their uncles had been members of a quartet heard on a local Alabama radio station.

In 1940, the Vaughan Four, at the suggestion of Merle Abner, changed their name to the Swanee River Boys, moved to WDOD in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and added a new tenor singer in the person of George Hughes. Born 1 March 1911 in Texarkana, Arkansas, Hughes, too, was reared in an environment that appreciated gospel music. His father was a singing-school teacher, and before he was twenty years old, George also was teaching singing schools (one student was Jimmy Wakely, the future singing cowboy, who played piano). Hughes, who was a product of the Stamps-Baxter School of Music, later moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where he sang in a trio with two brothers of cowgirl singer Patsy Montana.

Just prior to joining the Swanee River Boys, Hughes had been a member of a group called the Rangers Quartet. The members of this act--George Hughes, Walter Leverett, Vernon Hyles, and George's brother, Arnold Hughes--embarked on a cross-country jaunt to New York on bicycles with Major Bowes's talent show as their objective.<sup>3</sup> It was when they stopped off in Brownsville, Kentucky, to do a show at the courthouse that Billy Carrier and George Hughes first met. Hughes never completed the bicycle trip to New York. He left the Rangers in Kentucky and took a job at radio station WHAS in Louisville. A little later, Billy Carrier found him working as a salesman in Stearns, Kentucky, and persuaded him to join the Swanee River Boys in Chattanooga.

At WDOD, a five-thousand-watt station, the Swanee River Boys had two early morning shows and a spot on the "Noon-Day Frolic," the station's country music variety show. Other groups on the station at the time were Archie Campbell, a country comedian named Cousin Elmer, and a duet featuring Buford Abner's wife and her sister.

"We made personal appearances at school houses, churches, theaters, and other auditoriums mostly in northern Alabama and north Georgia," Billy Carrier recalls as he discusses the Chattanooga phase of the Swanee River Boys's career. "We did some shows in Tennessee, also, but most of our personal appearance work was in Georgia and Alabama."

"We soon developed a repertoire of some three hundred songs that we could do from memory," Billy adds. "Our stage shows were just under an hour and a half in length, and we featured comedy as well as music. Buford Abner was our comedian."

Early on, the Swanee River Boys worked out a division of labor that gave each member of the quartet equal responsibility in all aspects of their operation. "No one was boss," Billy Carrier

and it is to this arrangement that he gives major credit for keeping the same group of individuals together for such a long period of time. George Hughes served as emcee, Billy Car-

rier made up the programs and served as book-keeper, Merle Abner was in charge of the public address system, and Buford Abner was chief arranger. Buford was also the composer in the group, and before his retirement, his compositions would include such Swanee River Boys favorites as "Goin' Up to Be With God," "He Said It Would," "Jonah," "I'm Gonna Keep Walking," "Sin is What's the Matter With the World," "I Wan-na Hear," and "I Got Tired." Hughes and Carrier sold tickets at personal appearances to which the group traveled in Billy Carrier's automobile with each of the boys taking turns driving. Members of the quartet shared equally in the travel expenses.

Billy Carrier still has the ledger in which he kept a record of the quartet's income from personal appearances. The following are typical entries for show dates during their first two months at Chattanooga. Shown are gross receipts and net income per member after expenses.<sup>4</sup>

Thursday, March 7, Church of God, 43rd Street and Tenth Avenue, 75¢ each.

Friday, March 15, Liberty School near Dunlap, Tenn. Gross \$22.60. Each \$2.52.

Tuesday, March 26, School at Ider, Alabama. Gross \$31.85. Each \$3.38.

Thursday, March 28, Crox Harmony School, Charleston, Tennessee, Route 1. Gross \$17.24. Each \$1.25.

Friday, March 29, Red Hill Church, Whitfield, Tennessee. Gross \$17.55. Each \$1.47.

Friday, April 5, Center Point School, Dunlap, Tennessee. Gross \$13.85. Each \$1.00.

Wednesday, April 10, Charleston High School, Charleston, Tennessee. Gross \$27.25. Each \$2.71.

During their career as stage performers the Swanee River Boys had some interesting and sometimes frightening experiences, such as the time they had to perform in the presence of loaded guns. Buford Abner once described the incident:<sup>5</sup>

It happened down in the mountain country... You know, those people are very firm in their likes and dislikes... We were scheduled for a concert in a school house and it just so happened that the church across the road was having a "big doings" the same night. Well, the church people warned us that we weren't going to do any singing that night, and we understood what they meant. But just then the sheriff and his deputies rode up and asked if we wanted to sing. We told them we were real eager to give the concert, so the sheriff marched us in the auditorium and when the church people tried to start a rumpus, the sheriff went to work. He sat on the stage with his deputies and they kept their guns leveled on the crowd all the while we sang.

Billy Carrier recalls another incident related to their personal appearances that he says the Swanee River Boys will never forget because it reminds them of the many loyal fans they had over the years. Once when they performed at a place Carrier describes as being twenty-two miles from the nearest paved road and fifteen miles from the nearest electric light, a young couple with a six-week-old baby walked five miles in the rain to hear the Swanee River Boys's concert.

In October of 1940, the Swanee River Boys began, on WDOD, a daily fifteen-minute program that was sponsored by Black Draught, a popular patent medicine. The program, which lasted until March of 1941, was broadcast remote from Chattanooga by Nashville's WLAC beginning in January of 1941. As Billy Carrier recalls, the program was aired during the early morning hours. In order to avoid too frequent repetition of material he kept a daily log of the songs the quartet did on the Black Draught show (see Appendix).

The Swanee River Boys's repertoire at this time consisted of at least 186 different titles. Using Billy Carrier's categorical scheme, we find that 52 percent are gospel songs, 16 percent are folk songs, 15 percent are western songs, 13 percent are Negro spirituals, 2 percent are popular songs, and 2 percent are of a miscellaneous nature (two Christmas Carols, a patriotic song, and a blues number). In looking over the most frequently repeated songs during the period the log was kept, it is interesting to note that, according to Carrier's categorization, only one is a gospel song and more than half are secular. The program log also shows that the Swanee River Boys sang a total of 508 times. Gospel songs accounted for 36.2 percent; folk songs, 22.2 percent; western songs, 22 percent; Negro spirituals, 15.9 percent; popular songs, 2.2 percent; and miscellaneous songs (two Christmas Carols once each, one blues song twice, and a patriotic song three times), 1.4 percent.

If the Swanee River Boys's programming at this time reflected listener preferences, as was usually the case with such radio programs, one may conclude that their secular material was about as popular as their gospel and spiritual offerings. The group apparently acted wisely when they decided to diversify their repertoire.

To test the Swanee River Boys's drawing power, the management at WDOD once offered a free picture of the group to listeners of their 6:45 a.m. program. After three announcements of the offer, the station received 3,298 requests for the picture.

The Swanee River Boys had not been in Chattanooga long when the future Mrs. Billy Carrier, a young lady named Willene Daniel from Crossville, Alabama, came to WDOD to audition for a radio program directed by Archie Campbell. Willene was no stranger to the gospel music she heard the Swanee River Boys performing at the station. Her father, Roland J. Daniel, was a gospel musician and songwriter whose compositions, including "He is All the World to Me," appeared regularly in Stamps-

Baxter songbooks.

While the Swanee River Boys were enjoying the benefits of a sponsored daily radio program and an active personal appearance calendar in Chattanooga, the country music scene 115 miles to the south in Atlanta, Georgia, was undergoing some important changes. In December 1939, the city's most powerful station, 50,000-watt WSB, was purchased by Cox enterprises of Ohio. The station's new manager, J. Leonard Reinsch, immediately set about reorganizing the country music programming on "The Voice of the South." For assistance in recruiting new talent, Reinsch called on country music entrepreneur John Lair of Renfro Valley, Kentucky, whom he had known when they both were at WLS in Chicago.<sup>6</sup> The result was a full stable of top-flight singers, musicians, and comedians who appealed to WSB's vast rural audience. Lair made frequent visits to Atlanta to hold auditions and to put together a series of programs that included a regular Saturday night barn dance (that would run for almost ten years) and several daily broadcasts featuring small groups of the barn dance personnel.<sup>7</sup> An artist's service bureau under the direction of another Lair find, Harrison "Chick" Kimball, booked the Atlanta-based musicians into school auditoriums and theaters throughout Georgia and in surrounding states.

In the spring of 1941, the Swanee River Boys were interviewed and hired by John Lair. The announcement in *The Atlanta Journal* of their WSB debut said:

The Swanee River Boys, a new and tuneful foursome, will be at the WSB Barn Dance Saturday night at 10:30. They have joined the staff of talented entertainers at The Voice of the South and also are heard on the Little Country Church House from 1 to 1:15 p.m. every weekday except Friday over WSB.

These boys have been heard over radio stations and on the stage throughout the nation and have just been signed to an exclusive five-year contract by The Voice of the South....

During the past few months the boys have won special success throughout Tennessee and North Carolina. They specialize on both popular and sacred music.<sup>8</sup>

The Swanee River Boys's departure from Chattanooga was noted in the public relations organ of the Stamps-Baxter Music Company.

They [the Swanee River Boys] have come to the rescue of the Baxter quartet when Mr. and Mrs. Baxter would be called out of town. We appreciate them very much and they have won the admiration of thousands of friends. We thank them for singing our songs. They are products of the singing school and read music fluently. Their concerts are of the best and

their time has been filled for months in advance. Their work in the singing conventions has been splendid and they do not have to "put on a concert" at Sunday singings to make a hit, as some quartets try to do. We who live in Chattanooga regret to see them leave, but they are only going to WSB in Atlanta so that their host of friends can continue to tune them in. We will give their time over WSB as soon as it is set. They are going to be on the staff of WSB and work directly for the station--a decided feather in their cap. We shall follow their work with pride in knowing they will continue to sing Stamps-Baxter songs. Here's what our friends can do that will mean more to them than anything else: write a card or letter to Swanee River Boys, WSB, Atlanta, Georgia. They will more than appreciate it and so will we.<sup>9</sup>

Among the other entertainers appearing with the Swanee River Boys at WSB were Hank Penny; Pete Cassell; James and Martha Carson; Cotton Carrier, singer, fiddle player, and barn dance emcee; and Harpo Kidwell.

"Things were better for the Swanee River Boys in Atlanta," Billy Carrier recalls. Through the powerful facilities of WSB their music was heard in a broad area that included all of Georgia and the border regions of Alabama, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. As they became familiar to listeners in the towns, cities, and rural fastnesses of the area served by WSB, invitations for personal appearances increased. Billy Carrier says that they filled more than 1,500 engagements during their stay in Atlanta.

Among WSB listeners the most popular Swanee River Boys song was the gospel tour de force, "I've Found a Hiding Place." "We sang that song every Saturday night for years," Billy Carrier reminisces. Other favorites were "Dese Bones Gwinna Rise Again" and "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny."

The Swanee River Boys's arrangement of "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny" included a narration in Negro dialect by Buford Abner. As a result of such narrations, the high proportion of Negro spirituals in the group's repertoire, and the boys's heavy southern accents, many listeners thought the Swanee River Boys were black. At least one booking in a Black church resulted from that misunderstanding. "The congregation didn't know we were white and we didn't know they were black until we arrived at the church," Billy Carrier explains, "but we put on the show anyway, and it was a great success." After the Swanee River Boys had been heard on network radio they and the Golden Gate Quartet, the popular black entertainers, became great admirers of each other's music. The two groups met for the first time when the Golden

Gate Quartet appeared in concert at the city auditorium in Atlanta. "We went back stage to meet them," Billy recalls, "and they were very surprised to learn that we were white. All the time they had been listening to us they thought we were black."

To supplement their incomes from personal appearances, the Swanee River Boys, while at WSB, carried on a time-honored tradition among country and gospel music artists by selling songbooks at their stage shows and by mail over the radio. Entitled *Favorites of the Swanee River Boys*, the book sold for fifty cents. Billy Carrier states that they sold approximately 8,000 copies while the group was at the Atlanta station.

Either in late 1941 or early 1942, the Swanee River Boys made several trips to St. Louis, Missouri, where they joined a group of country/western performers to make transcriptions for Checkerboard Time, a radio program sponsored by the Purina Feed Company. According to Billy Carrier the transcriptions were heard on approximately 125 NBC stations. The other artists on the programs were Freddie Martin, Wilbur Ard, Johnny Thompson, Sally Foster, Chick Martin, Burt Dodson, Carl Lambertz, Jerry Scroggins, and Billy Hill.

Late in the year 1943, World War II caught up with the Swanee River Boys, and Merle and Buford Abner entered military service. With the original group now broken up, Billy Carrier and George Hughes went to Louisville, Kentucky, where they took non-music-related jobs. The lure of footlights and microphones soon proved too strong for the two, however, and after about a year they returned to Atlanta where the Swanee River Boys, this time with two new voices, was again heard on WSB. Joining Carrier and Hughes were Bill Lyles and Leroy Abernathy.

Abernathy, a native of Canton, Georgia, had been singing since he was five years old. Now a member of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, he is remembered by gospel music fans as the composer of "Gospel Boogie," the author of a mail order course in gospel piano playing, and as a member of such groups as the Modern Mountaineers, the Sand Mountain Boys, the Four Tones, the Rangers, and the Homeland Harmony Quartet.<sup>10</sup> Bass singer Bill Lyles, who later joined the Blackwood Brothers Quartet, was killed in the 1954 plane crash that also took the life of R. W. Blackwood.<sup>11</sup>

With their military obligations satisfied, in 1946 Buford and Merle Abner were reunited with Billy Carrier and George Hughes in Atlanta, and the original Swanee River Boys were back in business. After a short stay at WSB the four went to WBT in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a ten-month sojourn that included a spot on the CBS "Carolina Calling" program. Hosted by Grady Cole, this program also featured such acts as the Johnson Family, Fred Kirby, Whitey and Ho-

gan, the Briarhoppers, and Claude Casey.

The Swanee River Boys returned to WSB in the fall of 1946, and a year later, on Thanksgiving weekend of 1947, they, along with Little Joe Isabel and Blackie Hastings (two of their country music colleagues at WSB) journeyed to New York to appear on NBC's talent show, "The Big Break." Although the Swanee River Boys placed behind Atlanta opera singer Beverley Wolfe in the talent contest, they did land a fifteen-minute Saturday afternoon radio program on NBC.

In July of 1948 the Swanee River Boys left Atlanta and headed north looking for "greener pastures." "We auditioned at WOWO, Waterloo, Iowa," Carrier recalls, "but they said we were too good for them. From there we went to WLS in Chicago, but they wouldn't hire us because we didn't belong to the musicians's union." On their way south again, the Swanee River Boys accepted a job offer at WLW in Cincinnati. "We had to join the union before we could work at WLW," says Carrier. "After going to work there we were on call twelve hours a day," he continues, "then we had to be off twelve hours before we could work again. Personal appearances didn't count as part of the twelve hours we were on call. At one time while we were at WLW all the musicians were on call until midnight, and the only time we had to rehearse was from midnight until two o'clock in the morning."

At WLW the Swanee River Boys were heard on a wide variety of programs. "We were on both radio and television," Billy states, "and we did either gospel numbers or secular material, depending on what the particular show we were on called for. We did an average of twenty to twenty-five live shows per week. We had our own fifteen minute radio program, and on Sunday morning we sang on TV with a preacher. We also provided backup harmony for other singers at the station such as tenor Bob Shreve, a pop soloist. We appeared on the 'Friday Night Jamboree' and on Sunday nights we were on a TV show called 'Sunday Night Showcase.' Another show we were on was one called 'Builders of Destiny,' a thirty-minute program that dramatized the life of some great American. We would sing a song in keeping with the program's theme." Carrier adds that if they couldn't find an appropriate existing song

they would have to compose one especially for the occasion. During this time, the Swanee River Boys appeared on the Circle Arrow Show, a network program sponsored by Western Auto Company. "For that show, which was broadcast on Sundays," Carrier recalls, "we did our rehearsing on Friday. Sometimes on Friday they would give us a piece of music we'd never seen before, and we would have to be ready to sing it the following Sunday." Another WLW program on which the Swanee River Boys were featured was the Wednesday evening half-hour show called "Remember When With Ken and Glen." One summer while at WLW the Swanee River Boys did a summer replacement show for the Kate Smith program.

Billy Carrier remembers that during this period the Swanee River Boys recorded four sides for the MGM label with Fred Rose as producer. In January of 1952, Carrier left the Swanee River Boys; the other three members of the group stayed together until November of 1952, leaving Cincinnati for Huntington, West Virginia, with subsequent stints in Indianapolis and Nashville. After Carrier left, the Swanee River Boys recorded at least ten sides for King.

Although he stopped singing with the group, Billy Carrier remained in Cincinnati where he worked at non-musical jobs and performed on weekends with his wife. For ten years the two had a fifteen-minute program on Sundays on WPFB at nearby Middletown, Ohio.

In 1965 the Carriers returned to the Atlanta area where they now make their home in the suburb of Smyrna. For three years after coming to Atlanta they had a fifteen-minute Sunday program on Atlanta's WYZE. They were sometimes joined by their son Larry, a trained musician who now serves as minister of music at a church in Chesapeake, Virginia. The Carriers have four other children--two daughters, both married to ministers; and two sons, one a civil engineer and the other an Atlanta businessman.

The original Swanee River Boys now are all retired after having performed together for thirteen years. Buford Abner lives in Indianapolis, Indiana; and Merle Abner and George Hughes reside in their respective original hometowns of Wedowee, Alabama, and Texarkana, Arkansas.

#### NOTES

1. This and succeeding statements attributed to Billy Carrier were made during personal interviews by the author on July 15 and July 22, 1980. (The bulk of the information contained in this article was obtained during these interviews as well as with Mrs. Billy Carrier at their home in Smyrna, Georgia.)
2. Wayne W. Daniel, "From Barn Dance Emcee to Recording Company Executive--The Story of Cotton Carrier," *JEMF Quarterly*, 56 (Winter 1979), pp. 230-236.

3. See Jesse Burt and Duane Allen, *The History of Gospel Music* (Nashville: The K & S Press, 1971), p. 30, in which gospel singer and composer J. D. Sumner is credited with explaining that "The Rangers, in reality, carried bikes on top of their car, or cars, the latter being parked at the edge of towns. Then they would peddle [sic] the two wheelers to wherever it was they were appearing--a smart piece of showmanship."
4. Swanee River Boys expense book now in possession of Billy Carrier.
5. *WLW News and Mat Service*, 25 (February 22, 1952), p. 1.
6. J. Leonard Reinsch, personal communication to author.
7. John Lair, personal communication to author.
8. *The Atlanta Journal*, March 22, 1941, p. 9.
9. *Stamps-Baxter Music News*, no date.
10. Lois S. Blackwell, *The Wings of the Dove* (Norfolk, Virginia: Donning, 1978), pp. 64-65, 149.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 73.



The Swanee River Boys at WDOD, Chattanooga, Tennessee. (l to r) George Hughes, Billy Carrier, Chuck Simpson (announcer), Merle Abner, Buford Abner. Ca. 1940.



Checkerboard Time Cast. (l to r, first row) George Hughes, Buford Abner, Billy Hill, Merle Abner, Billy Carrier; (second row) Freddie Martin, Wilbur Ard, Johnny Thompson, Sally Foster, Chick Martin, Burt Dodson, Carl Lambertz, Jerry Scroggins. Ca. 1942.

Swanee River Boys Show Date Ledger for 1940. Kept by Billy Carrier

Date	Place		Gross	Each	Income Sponsor
Thurs. March 7	Church of God, 43rd St. & 10th Ave.				75¢
Fri. March 15	Liberty School near Dunlap, Tenn.	\$22.60			\$2.52
Tues. March 26	School at Ider, Ala.	\$31.85			\$3.38 Boy Scouts
Thurs. March 28	Crox Harmony School				
	Charleston, Tenn. R. 1	\$17.24			\$1.25
Fri. March 29	Red Hill Church, Whitwell, Tenn.	\$17.55			\$1.47
Fri. April 5	Center Point School, Dunlap, Tenn.	\$13.85			\$1.00
Wed. April 10	Charleston High School				
	Charleston, Tenn.	\$27.25			\$2.71
Thurs. April 11	School, Flat Rock, Ala.	\$31.65			\$2.50 School & Baseball Team
Mon. April 15	Richard Hardy Aud.				
	Richard City, Tenn.	\$46.74			\$6.00 Singing C.
Tues. April 16	Guild School, Guild, Tenn.	\$35.60			\$5.00
Wed. April 24	Chattanooga Valley School	\$33.70			\$5.60
Thurs. April 25	<i>Five miles east of</i> Fischer School, Fort Payne, Ala.	\$42.90			\$6.20 School
Fri. April 26	Center Post School, Lafayette, Ga.	\$26.85			\$3.15

Tues. April 30	Lusk School near Dunlap, Tenn.	No show
Wed. May 1	Valley Home School, Pelham, Tenn.	Small crowd. Expenses
Thurs. May 2	Kimball School, Kimball, Tenn.	Small crowd. Expenses
Fri. May 3	Court House in Calhoun, Ga.	\$42.35 \$4.52
Mon. May 6	Court House in Jasper, Tenn.	No show
		Ebenezer Home
		Dem. Club
Thurs. May 9	Lusk School near Dunlap, Tenn.	\$24.30 \$3.00
Fri. May 10	Court House in Summerville, Ga.	\$74.20 \$12.40
Wed. May 15	Town Hall, Sequatchie Tenn.	\$19.90 \$2.01
Thurs. May 16	High Point School near	
	Chattanooga Valley	\$24.94 \$3.73
Fri. May 17	South Harriman High School Harriman, Tenn.	Our Part \$14.00 \$1.00 Senior class
Mon. May 20	Sulphur Springs Church	
	Sulphur Springs, Ala.	\$26.65 \$3.18 Sunday School
Tues. May 21	Grammar School at	
	Lupton City, Tenn.	\$35.00 \$5.35
Wed. May 22	Pleasant Grove School near	
	Dalton, Ga.	\$62.80 \$8.75
Thurs. May 23	Plainville School, Plainville, Ga. 9 miles SW of Calhoun, Ga.	\$35.50 \$3.83 Missionary Society

Fri. May 24	Whitwell High School Whitwell, Tenn.	\$25.65	\$3.10	Home Dem. Club
Sun. May 26	Freylach Swimming Pool near Dalton, Ga.	Flat Rate \$35.00	\$7.00	
Tues. May 28	Soddy Junior High School Soddy, Tenn.	\$26.60	\$4.00	Baseball Team
Wed. May 29	Mountain View School near Long Island, Ala.	\$20.75	\$3.13	
Thurs. May 30	Collins School, Palmer, Tenn.	\$22.85	\$5.00	
Fri. May 31	Everette Springs High School Everette Springs, Ga.	\$32.00	\$5.25	M. E. Church
Tues. June 4	Morganville Jr. Hi. School Morganville, Ga.	\$21.75	\$3.25	Baseball club
Wed. June 5	Varnell High School, Varnell Ga.	\$45.30	\$6.72	Baptist Church
Thurs. June 6	Tunnel Hill Ga. School	\$29.25	\$4.30	Missionary Society
Fri. June 7	Little Theater in Rome, Ga.	\$18.10	\$2.25	Anchor Rebaph (?) Lodge
Tues. June 11	Plainview Jr. Hi. School 8 miles west of Fort Payne, Ala.	\$30.45	\$3.54	Plainview Home Dem. Club
Thurs. June 13	Ring Theater, Ringgold, Ga.	\$66.90	\$7.55	
Fri. June 14	School at Flat Rock, Ala.	\$18.10	\$2.25	Baseball Team

Sat.	June 15	Court House in Brownsville, Ky.	\$13.20	Expenses
Wed.	June 19	Claysville Jr. Hi. School near Guntersville, Ala.	\$19.60	\$1.85
Thurs.	June 20	South Pittsburg High School <sup>A</sup> Pittsburg, Tenn.	No show	Baseball Team
Fri.	June 21	Court House in Summerville, Ga.	\$70.40	\$10.98
Sat.	June 22	Pineville Grammar School near Chattanooga	\$19.11	\$2.96
Mon.	June 24	Fairmount Community Aud. on Signal Mt.	\$14.70	\$2.00
Tues.	June 25	Geraldine Hi School Geraldine, Ala.	\$31.25	\$3.10
Wed.	June 26	Marble Hill School Marble Hill, Ga.	\$23.45	\$1.60
Thurs.	June 27	Calhoun Hi School Calhoun, Tenn.	\$26.25	\$2.70
Fri.	June 28	Pleasant Grove School near Dalton, Ga.	\$33.45	\$3.90
Sat.	June 29	Pisgah High School Pisgah, Ala.	\$42.30	\$5.14
Mon.	July 1	Coalmont School, Coalmont, Tenn.	\$25.70	\$2.59
				PTA

Tues. July 2	Naomi School, 4 miles east of La Fayette, Ga.	\$40.48	\$5.43	Missionary Society
Wed. July 3	Court House in Murphy, N. C.	\$17.70	\$ .17	Eastern Star
Sat. July 6	Wills Valley School, 3 miles N. of Fort Payne, Ala.	\$56.05	\$7.68	
Mon. July 8	Court House in Dalton, Ga.	\$45.20	\$8.17	Young Men's Democrat Club
Tues. July 9	Mount Carmel School, 3 miles west of Bridgeport, Ala.	\$16.75	\$2.28	Ice Cream Supper
Fri. July 12	School at Trenton, Ga.	\$33.18	\$4.23	
Sat. July 13	Rosalie School, Flat Rock, Ala. Between Flat Rock & Pisgah, Ala.	\$46.65	\$6.28	Girl's Sewing Club
Sun. July 14	Convention at Sand Rock Hi. School near Collinsville, Ala.	\$24.56	\$4.14	
Mon. July 15	Palmer Grammar School, Palmer, Tenn. No show			Epworth League
Tues. July 16	Grove Oak School, Grove Oak, Ala. 8 miles W. of Geraldine, Ala.	\$40.60	\$4.00	Home Dem. Club
Thurs. July 18	Waterville School 4 miles South of Naomi, Ga.	\$30.05	\$3.62	
Fri. July 19	Daisy Theater, Daisy, Tenn.	No record		
Sat. July 20	Sylvania School, Sylvania, Ala.	\$46.85	\$6.33	Baptist Sunday School
Mon. July 22	Dewberry Church near Crandall, Ga.	\$34.60	\$4.00	

Tues. July 23	Morgantown School near Dayton, Tenn.	No show	PTA
Wed. July 24	Cumberland Homesteads School		
	<u>Crossville, Tenn.</u>	No show	Football Team
Thurs. July 25	Hopewell Church near		
	<u>Geraldine, Ala.</u>	\$35.10	\$2.88
Fri. July 26	Greasy Creek School		
	<u>Archville, Tenn.</u>	\$18.90	\$1.75
Sat. July 27	Homecoming at Princeton, Ala.	Flat Rate	
		\$60.00	\$15.00
Sat. July 27	Court House in Wedowee, Ala.	\$57.35	\$8.00
			Swagg Home Dem.
			Club
Wed. July 31	Ruhama Jr. Hi. School 8 miles		
	<u>South of Fort Payne, Ala.</u>	\$21.90	\$1.75
Fri. Aug. 2	Arnold Grammar School		
	<u>Cleveland, Tenn.</u>	\$57.45	\$8.00
			Church
Sun. Aug. 4	Texas Ranch 12 miles out	Flat Rate	
	<u>Highway 41</u>	\$20.00	\$4.75
Mon. Aug. 5	Dawnville School 8 miles N. E.		
	<u>of Dalton, Ga.</u>	\$55.40	\$7.85
Tues. Aug. 6	Armuchee Baptist Church		
	<u>Armuchee, Ga.</u>	\$37.75	\$4.39
Thurs. Aug. 8	School at Rising Fawn, Ga.	\$38.00	\$5.15



## VAUGHAN FOUR

—  
Abner Bros. and Billy Carrier  
—

From the  
**WNOX MERRY - GO - ROUND**  
—

Representing James D. Vaughan Music Co.  
Lawrenceburg, Tenn.

WILL APPEAR IN CONCERT  
**Rollins Chapel School**  
9 Miles South of Greenville

Fri. Nite Apr. 21, 8:00 P. M.  
Admission 15-25c

**GALA OPENING!!**  
**SATURDAY NIGHT**

**MAY 23** and Every Saturday Thereafter

*The WSB*  
**BARN DANCE**

**ON THE STAGE**

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**THE "CREAM" OF THE HILLBILLY WORLD!**

*Featuring*

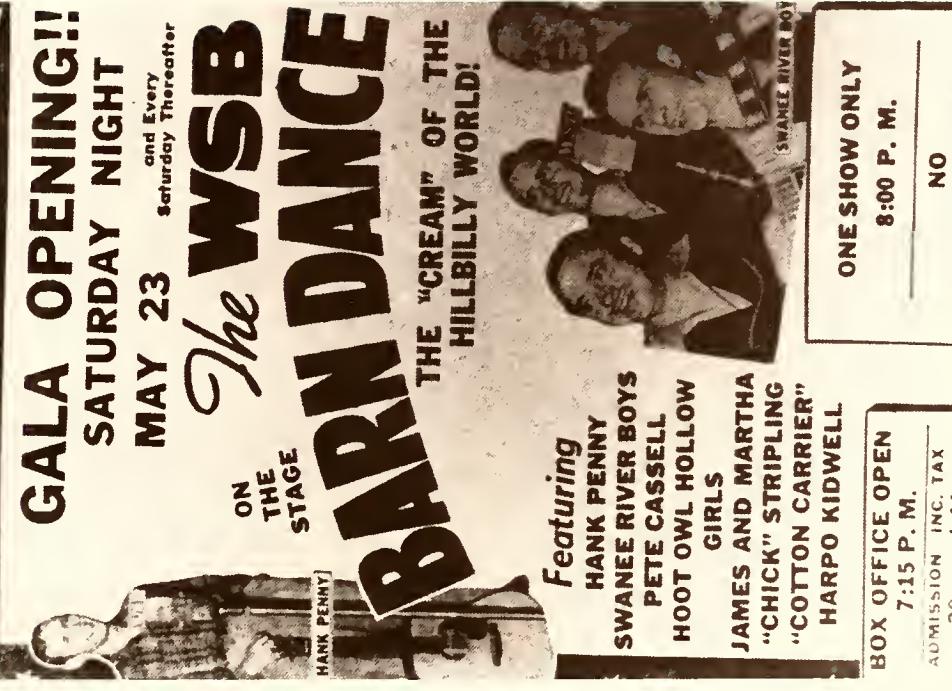
**HANK PENNY  
SWANEE RIVER BOYS  
PETE CASSELL  
HOOT OWL HOLLOW  
GIRLS  
JAMES AND MARTHA  
"CHICK" STRIPLING  
"COTTON CARRIER"  
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**ONE SHOW ONLY**  
**8:00 P. M.**

**NO RESERVATION**

**BOX OFFICE OPEN**  
**7:15 P. M.**

**ADMISSION INC. TAX**  
**20c and 44c**



Poster advertising Vaughan Four show date. Ca. 1939.  
Poster advertising the opening of the WSB Barn Dance at the Erlanger Theater in Atlanta. Ca. 1941.

Poster, with picture of the Swanee River Boys, announcing the opening of the WSB Barn Dance at the Erlanger Theater in Atlanta. Ca. 1941.



The Swanee River Boys and WSB Barn Dance emcee, Chick Kimball. (l to r) George Hughes, Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Billy Carrier, Kimball. Ca. 1942.



The Swanee River Boys at WBT, Charlotte, North Carolina. (l to r) George Hughes, Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Billy Carrier. Ca. 1946.

A PRELIMINARY SWANEE RIVER BOYS  
NUMERICAL RECORD LISTING

*[This numerical record listing is based on the King 500 Series lists appearing in the JEMF Quarterly, 14 (Summer 1969); 15 (Autumn 1969); 16 (Winter 1969) and on information provided by Billy Carrier.]*

78-rpm Records

<u>Release No.</u>	<u>Master No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
King 1220		What am I Gonna Do Wherever I Go
King 1254		Gloryland Boogie Do You Believe
King 1258		Was He Quiet or Did He Cry I Have a Desire
King 1289		I've Got a Date to Meet an Angel When I Move
King 1326		Not Necessarily He Lifted Me From Sin
King 1349	3657	Married Life
	3656	Because I Love You So
King 1401		I Wanna Hear I Got Tired
King 1431		I Don't Worry Fire's A-Comin'
MGM 10913		Carry Me Back to Old Virginny Sin is What's the Matter (With this World We're In)

ALBUMS

King 567, *SACRED SONGS* (Buford Abner, Merle Abner, George Hughes, Horace Floyd)

Songs: Gloryland Boogie  
 Was He Quiet or Did He Cry  
 Do You Believe?  
 I'd Rather Be a Servant  
 When I Move  
 Remember My Name in Your Prayers  
 I Have a Desire  
 Fire's A-Comin'  
 He Lifted Me From Sin  
 I've Got a Date to Meet an Angel  
 Not Necessarily  
 I Don't Worry

Skylite SLP 6066, *THE SPIRITUAL SOUNDS OF THE SWANEE RIVER BOYS* (Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Bill Nelson, Bill Carver)

Songs: When I Wake Up that Morning  
 I Talk to Him in Prayer  
 Do You Believe?  
 I Love Him More  
 When I Move  
 Was He Quiet or Did He Cry?  
 Ole Virginny  
 Worrying  
 Dip Your Finger in Some Water  
 A Quiet Room  
 An Empty Mansion  
 Things Invisible

Skylite SLP 6077, *I'M BUILDING A BRIDGE* (Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Bill Carver, Bill Nelson)

Songs: Leave it Alone  
 A Date with an Angel  
 Do a Little More  
 The Uncloaked Day  
 I'm Building a Bridge  
 Don't Wait for the Hearse  
 I am in His Care  
 Move to the Top of the Mountain  
 There's One  
 Satisfied Mind  
 Glory to His Name

Zondervan ZLP 635, *THE SWANEE RIVER BOYS FINEST* (Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Bill Carver, Don Stringfellow)

Songs: Up to the House of the Lord  
 A Man Who is Wise  
 A Fool Such as I  
 Tribulation  
 I'll Never Turn Back  
 Wade in De Water  
 Lower Lights  
 The Sun Didn't Shine  
 O What a Saviour  
 Heaven Someday I'll Gain  
 By and By  
 Where No One Stands Alone

Zondervan ZLP 641, *JERRY BARNES AND THE SWANEE RIVER BOYS SING COUNTRY GOSPEL* (Jerry Barnes, Buford Abner, Merle Abner, Bill Carver, Bill Nelson)

Songs: Wings of a Dove  
 According to Thy Loving Kindness  
 He's Everywhere  
 All Day, All Night  
 Do Lord  
 Do You Think to Pray  
 Didn't My Lord deliver Daniel  
 Stand By Me  
 Blessed Assurance  
 Old Ship of Zion  
 I Need the Prayers of Those I Love  
 When We See Christ

## RADIO PROGRAMS

WDOD, Chattanooga, Tennessee

[Swanee River Boys started on "Black-Draught Commercial" Wednesday, October 23, 1940]

<u>Date of Program</u>	<u>Selections</u>
23 October 1940 (Wednesday)	Ragtime Cowboy Joe King Jesus is A-Listining Polly Wolly Doodle Did You Ever Go Sailin' He Bore it All
24 October 1940 (Thursday)	I'd Like to be in Texas Old Black Joe Put on an Old Pair of Shoes Everybody Will be Happy Over There
25 October 1940 (Friday)	Cryin' Holy unto the Lord Tumbling Tumbleweeds The Man with the Mandolin Remember Me
26 October 1940 (Saturday)	Lord I Wanna Be Ready Down by the Old Rustic Well My Blue Ridge Mountain Home Wayside Wells There's a Home in Wyoming
28 October 1940 (Monday)	Roll Along Covered Wagon Cabin on a Hilltop Babylon's Fallin' Looking for You They'll Welcome Me Back Home
29 October 1940 (Tuesday)	There's a Little Pine Log Cabin Happy Cowboy Old Time Religion I've Been List'nning in on Heaven
30 October 1940 (Wednesday)	Headin' for the Rio Grande Grandfather's Clock When You Come Out the Wilderness An Empty Mansion
31 October 1940 (Thursday)	I Know De Lawd Cowboy's Dream Shortenin' Bread On and On We Walk Together
1 November 1940 (Friday)	That's My Mammy Leanin' on the Old Top Rail Every Time I Feel the Spirit Turn Your Radio On
2 November 1940 (Saturday)	Echoes from the Hills Troubled Lord I'm Troubled Song of the Marines Right Will Always Win
4 November 1940 (Monday)	Ole Faithful Cabin of Memories He Had to Run He Whispers Sweet Peace to Me

5 November 1940  
(Tuesday)  
A Wheel in a Wheel  
Old Mister Moon Man  
Old Chis'olm Trail  
You Will be My Closest Neighbor

6 November 1940  
(Wednesday)  
These Bones Gonna Rise Again  
Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day  
Great Grandad  
It's a Mighty Hard Road to Travel

7 November 1940  
(Thursday)  
Look Away to Heaven  
My Little Boy Blue  
It's Just Like Heaven  
I Still Do

8 November 1940  
(Friday)  
My Wildwood Rose  
Blow Prairie Wind  
I'm Living Humble  
Victory in Jesus

9 November 1940  
(Saturday)  
Git Along Little Dogies  
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny  
Thundering Hoofs  
Salvation has been Brought Down

11 November 1940  
(Monday)  
We'll Understand it Better By and By  
Cabin in the Valley of the Pines  
Happy Cowboy  
Gethsemane

12 November 1940  
(Tuesday)  
Heaven in View  
I Follow the Stream  
Put on an Old Pair of Shoes  
Talk it Over with Jesus

13 November 1940  
(Wednesday)  
Roll Along Covered Wagon  
King Jesus is A-Listening  
Did You Ever go Sailin'  
Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

14 November 1940  
(Thursday)  
Headin' for the Rio Grande  
Old Black Joe  
Cryin' Holy unto the Lord  
Living for Jesus

15 November 1940  
(Friday)  
When You Come Out the Wilderness  
Cowboy's Dream  
My Blue Ridge Mountain Home  
Won't it be Wonderful There

16 November 1940  
(Saturday)  
My Dear Old Arizona Home  
Down by the Old Rustic Well  
Polly Wolly Doodle  
Jesus Paid it All  
We Will Rise and Shine

18 November 1940  
(Monday)  
Lawd I Wanna be Ready  
On a Little Dream Ranch  
Song of the Marines  
Mighty Close to Heaven

19 November 1940  
(Tuesday)  
I Know de Lawd  
There's a Little Pine Log Cabin  
Chant of the Wanderer  
Standing Outside

20 November 1940  
(Wednesday)  
I'd Like to be in Texas  
Grandfather's Clock  
When the Sun Goes Down Again  
I am Just a Pilgrim

21 November 1940 (Thursday)	Wheel in a Wheel Ridin' Home On a Farm in Indiana I'll Meet You in the Morning
22 November 1940 (Friday)	Ragtime Cowboy Joe When the White Azelias Start Blooming Sing on Brother Sing Remember Me
23 November 1940 (Saturday)	Every Time I Feel the Spirit Timber There's a Home in Wyoming Meet Me at the Coronation
25 November 1940 (Monday)	Echoes from the Hills Troubled Lord I'm Troubled Man with the Mandolin Wayside Wells Swing Wide Yo Golden Gate
26 November 1940 (Tuesday)	Babylon's Fallin' Little Boy Blue Old Chis'olm Trail Everybody Will be Happy Over There There's a Home in Wyoming
27 November 1940 (Wednesday)	I'm Living Humble Tumbling Tumbleweeds They'll Welcome Me Back Home Looking for You
28 November 1940 (Thursday)	Happy Cowboy Timber He had to Run Right Will Always Win
29 November 1940 (Friday)	Ole Faithful Cabin in the Valley of the Pines Cryin' Holy unto the Lord An Empty Mansion
30 November 1940 (Saturday)	Look Away to Heaven Old Mister Moon Man Chant of the Wanderer It's a Mighty Hard Road to Travel
2 December 1940 (Monday)	Thundering Hoofs Cabin on a Hilltop Old Time Religion You Will be My Closest Neighbor
3 December 1940 (Tuesday)	When You Come Out the Wilderness Blow Prairie Wind Great Grandad He Whispers Sweet Peace to Me
4 December 1940 (Wednesday)	Roll Along Covered Wagon Old Black Joe King Jesus is A-Listening Gethsemane
5 December 1940 (Thursday)	Headin' for the Rio Grande Cabin of Memories We'll Understand it Better By & By Angels Rock Me to Sleep
6 December 1940 (Friday)	I Know de Lawd Git Along Little Dogies Did You Ever go Sailin' Her Mansion is Higher than Mine

7 December 1940  
(Saturday)

Lawd I Wanna be Ready  
Leanin' on the Old Top Rail  
He Keeps My Soul  
That's My Mammy

9 December 1940  
(Monday)

My Dear Old Arizona Home  
Heaven in View  
When the Sun goes Down Again  
He Bore it All

10 December 1940  
(Tuesday)

I Follow the Stream  
When the White Azelias Start Blooming  
Babylon's Fallin'  
I've Been List'ning in on Heaven

11 December 1940  
(Wednesday)

Dese Bones Gonna Rise Again  
Cowboy's Dream  
On a Farm in Indiana  
Victory in Jesus

12 December 1940  
(Thursday)

Echoes from the Hills  
There's a Little Pine Log Cabin  
Wheel in a Wheel  
I am Just a Pilgrim

13 December 1940  
(Friday)

Cryin' Holy unto the Lord  
Rhythm in the Hills  
They'll Welcome Me back Home  
Talk it Over with Jesus

14 December 1940  
(Saturday)

I'd Like to be in Texas  
I Still Do  
He had to Run  
Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

16 December 1940  
(Monday)

Happy Cowboy  
My Wildwood Rose  
Put on an Old Pair of Shoes  
Living for Jesus

17 December 1940  
(Tuesday)

Look Away to Heaven  
Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day  
Man with the Mandolin  
Meet Me at the Coronation

18 December 1940  
(Wednesday)

Shortenin' Bread  
Ole Faithful  
Great Grandad  
On and On We Walk Together

19 December 1940  
(Thursday)

When You Come Out the Wilderness  
Cabin in the Valley of the Pines  
The Old Chis'olm Trail  
It's a Mighty Hard Road to Travel  
Swing Wide Yo Golden Gate

20 December 1940  
(Friday)

Roll Along Covered Wagon  
Down by the Old Rustic Well  
We'll Understand it Better By & By  
Jesus Paid it All

21 December 1940  
(Saturday)

Thundering Hoofs  
I Know de Lawd  
Cabin of Memories  
Right Will Always Win  
There's a Home in Wyoming

23 December 1940  
(Monday)

Ragtime Cowboy Joe  
King Jesus is A-Listening  
Polly Wolly Doodle  
Remember Me  
Did You Ever go Sailin'

24 January 1941 (Friday)	De Camptown Races Dreaming Alone in the Twilight Happy Cowboy God Knows the Best
25 January 1941 (Saturday)	In the Valley of Pines Lord I Wanna be Ready I'd Like to be in Texas Look to Jesus and Live
27 January 1941 (Monday)	Ridin' Home I've Found a Hiding Place My Sailboat of Dreams Right Will Always Win
28 January 1941 (Tuesday)	Chant of the Wanderer I'm Gonna Cling to the Cross My Dream Home in Glory When the Saints go Marchin' In
29 January 1941 (Wednesday)	Every Time I Feel the Spirit Git Along Little Dogies An Empty Mansion The Rainbow Trail
30 January 1941 (Thursday)	Sleep My Baby Sleep I Know My Lord's Gonna Lead Me Out I Follow the Stream Too Sacred for Mortal Eyes to See
31 January 1941 (Friday)	My Little Boy Blue De Camptown Races Old Chis'olm Trail I'm Only on a Visit Here
1 February 1941 (Saturday)	Ezekiel Saw the Wheel The Church in the Wildwood I'd Like to be in Texas God Knows the Best I've Made a Covenant with My Lord
3 February 1941 (Monday)	Oh Mary Don't You Weep Don't You Mourn My Little Boy Blue When I Hear the Welcome Bells Ring Have a Little Talk with Jesus
4 Feburary 1941 (Tuesday)	Keep A-Inchin' Along Git Along Little Dogies God's Great Plan Gather in the Grain
5 Feburary 1941 (Wednesday)	Roundup in the Sky In the Valley of Pines Headin' for Gloryland He is All the World to Me
6 February 1941 (Thursday)	Let's Go down to Jordan A Light in the Window of Heaven Love Comes Shining Through I'm in the New Jerusalem Way
7 February 1941 (Friday)	I'm Living Humble Cowboy's Dream I've Been Listening in on Heaven Cling to the Cross
8 February 1941 (Saturday)	Mocking Bird Valley Roundup in the Sky He's Coming Back Again I Got that Old Time Religion in My Heart

8 January 1941  
(Wednesday)

I Know the Lord Laid His Hand on Me  
Old Black Joe  
Happy Cowboy  
We'll Simply be Delighted

9 January 1941  
(Thursday)

Shortenin' Bread  
Ridin' Home  
Great Grandad  
Sweet Harbor Bells

10 January 1941  
(Friday)

Old Time Religion  
There's a Little Pine Log Cabin  
Old Chis'olm Trail  
I Hold His Hand

11 January 1941  
(Saturday)

They'll Welcome Me back Home  
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny  
Git Along Little Dogies  
There's a Light in the Window of Heaven

13 January 1941  
(Monday)

Cryin' Holy unto the Lord  
My Little Boy Blue  
Chant of the Wanderer  
A Light in the Window of Heaven  
When the Saints go Marchin' In

14 January 1941  
(Tuesday)

My Dear Old Arizona Home  
I'm Living Humble  
Dreaming Alone in the Twilight  
Going to Heaven

15 January 1941  
(Wednesday)

Cabin of Memories  
Old Chis'olm Trail  
King Jesus is A-Listening  
He Bore it All  
I've Been List'ning in on Heaven

16 January 1941  
(Thursday)

Every Time I Feel the Spirit  
Cowboy's Dream  
Sleep My Baby Sleep  
God's Great Plan

17 January 1941  
(Friday)

Saddle the Sun  
I Know the Lawd Laid His Hand on Me  
In the Valley of Pines  
Love Comes Shining Through

18 January 1941  
(Saturday)

Old Time Religion  
I Follow the Stream  
Church in the Wildwood  
I'm Gonna be in that Glad Band

20 January 1941  
(Monday)

Echoes from the Hills  
Grandfather's Clock  
Babylon's Fallin'  
I've Changed My Mind

21 January 1941  
(Tuesday)

Cryin' Holy unto the Lord  
Cabin in the Valley of the Pines  
I Still Do  
He Said if I be Lifted Up

22 January 1941  
(Wednesday)

There's a Little Pine Log Cabin  
Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day  
Keep Inchin' Along  
I'll Make it My Home

23 January 1941  
(Thursday)

Saddle the Sun  
Old Mister Moon Man  
Talk it Over with Jesus  
I am on My Way

24 December 1940 (Tuesday)	He Whispers Sweet Peace to Me O I Want to See Him Just What he Promised Me Silent Night
25 December 1940 (Wednesday)	He Will be With Me It Came Upon the Midnight Clear Sweet Harbor Bells I'll Make it My Home
26 December 1940 (Thursday)	My Blue Ridge Mountain Home Old Black Joe Chant of the Wanderer I'll Meet You in the Morning
27 December 1940 (Friday)	Headin' for the Rio Grande Troubled Lord I'm Troubled Song of the Marines Make Somebody Glad
28 December 1940 (Saturday)	Thundering Hoofs Carry Me Back to Old Virginny He had to Run Wayside Wells We Will Rise and Shine
30 December 1940 (Monday)	Git Along Little Dogies My Little Boy Blue I'm Living Humble You Will be My Closest Neighbor
31 December 1940 (Tuesday)	King Jesus is A-Listening Cowboy's Dream They'll Welcome Me Back Home Sitting at the Feet of Jesus
1 January 1941 (Wednesday)	I'd Like to be in Texas Cabin of Memories Dese Bones Gonna Rise Again I'm Gonna Cling to the Cross Till I Die
2 January 1941 (Thursday)	Cryin' Holy unto the Lord Grandfather's Clock Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day Precious Jesus don't Forget
3 January 1941 (Friday)	Lawd I Wanna be Ready Cabin in the Valley of the Pines My Dear Old Arizona Home I'm in the New Jerusalem Way I'll Shout and Shine
4 January 1941 (Saturday)	Polly Wolly Doodle Babylon's Fallin' I Still Do O Lord I Feel so Weary
(Beginning on January 6, 1941 the WDOD program was also broadcast by wire to WLAC, Nashville, Tennessee at 6:15 a.m.)	
6 January 1941 (Monday)	I Follow the Stream Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John There's a Happy Time in Heaven Did You Ever go Sailin' Rock of Ages Hide Thou Me
7 January 1941 (Tuesday)	Echoes from the Hills Old Mister Moon Man De Camptown Races Right Will Always Win The Way to Glory Land

10 February 1941  
(Monday)

Steal Away  
My Dream Home in Glory  
Make Me a Cowboy  
Let Me Live Close to Thee

11 February 1941  
(Tuesday)

Gentle Annie  
Standing in the Need of Prayer  
Saddle the Sun  
Climb Upward with a Song

12 February 1941  
(Wednesday)

Polly Wolly Woodie  
Did You Ever go Sailin'  
I've Changed My Mind  
Some of These Days

13 February 1941  
(Thursday)

Hard Times Come Again No More  
King Jesus is A-Listening  
In the Valley of Pines  
There's a Happy Time in Heaven

14 February 1941  
(Friday)

I Still Do  
Ain't Gonna Study War No More  
They'll Welcome Me back Home  
Gethsemane

15 February 1941  
(Saturday)

Grandfather's Clock  
Ridin' Home  
My Lawd Oh No  
Where Could I Go

17 February 1941  
(Monday)

Every Time I Feel the Spirit  
I Follow the Stream  
The Little Brown Church  
Love Worked Wonders in Me

18 February 1941  
(Tuesday)

Let's Go Down to Jordan  
Dreaming Alone in the Twilight  
I'd Like to be in Texas  
A Beautiful Life

19 February 1941  
(Wednesday)

Great Grandad  
Babylon's Fallin'  
Echoes from the Hills  
If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again

20 February 1941  
(Thursday)

Mocking Bird Valley  
Lord I Wanna be Ready  
Happy Cowboy  
He Lights the Dark Valley for Me

21 February 1941  
(Friday)

The West is in My Soul  
De Camptown Races  
Gentle Annie  
Love Comes Shining Through

22 February 1941  
(Saturday)

Round Up in the Sky  
Old Black Joe  
That Old Cabin  
Precious Memories

24 February 1941  
(Monday)

Open Range Ahead  
Steal Away  
My Cathedral of Dreams  
God Knows the Best

25 February 1941  
(Tuesday)

Oh Mary Don't You Weep  
Trail Dreamin'  
Hard Times Come Again No More  
I've Made a Covenant with My Lord

26 February 1941  
(Wednesday)

Standin' in the Need of Prayer  
Chant of the Wanderer  
Old Mister Moon Man  
Take God's Pathway

27 February 1941 (Thursday)	Heab'n My Dream Home in Glory Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day Gather in the Grain
28 February 1941 (Friday)	Standin' in the Need of Prayer Polly Wolly Doodle Saddle the Sun Somebody Knows
1 March 1941 (Saturday)	Did You Ever Go Sailin' My Lord Oh No I Still Do Let Me Live Close to Thee
3 March 1941 (Monday)	I'm Living Humble Git Along Little Dogies Sleep My Baby Sleep When I hear the Welcome Bells Ring
4 March 1941 (Tuesday)	Ezekiel Saw the Wheel My Sailboat of Dreams Old Chis'olm Trail Walking with My King I Look for His Face in the Sky
5 March 1941 (Wednesday)	I Follow the Stream Every Time I Feel the Spirit They'll Welcome Me Back Home Lord Lead Me On
6 March 1941 (Thursday)	Cryin' Holy unto the Lord Cabin in the Valley of the Pines The West is in My Soul Love Worked Wonders in Me
7 March 1941 (Friday)	Grandfather's Clock Down by the Riverside Cowboy's Dream Climb Upward with a Song
8 March 1941 (Saturday)	Lord I Wanna be Ready Open Range Ahead Carry Me back to Old Virginny The Golden Jubilee
10 March 1941 (Monday)	Trail Dreaming Babylon's Fallin' My Cathedral of Dreams He Lights the Dark Valley for Me
11 March 1941 (Tuesday)	Steal Away Chant of the Wanderer In the Valley of Pines There's a Happy Time in Heaven
12 March 1941 (Wednesday)	Make Me a Cowboy Again for a Day My Lord Oh No My Dream Home in Glory I've Made a Covenant with My Lord
13 March 1941 (Thursday)	Mocking Bird Valley Camptown Races Happy Cowboy I've Got that Old Time Religion in My Heart
14 March 1941 (Friday)	The Little Brown Church Saddle the Sun Oh Mary Don't You Weep Don't You Mourn God Knows the Best

## PIANO BLUES REISSUES

-- Norm Cohen

In the past twenty or so years there have been upwards of 250 LP albums of pre-War blues/gospel reissues produced in the United States and abroad. Barring duplications (of which there are a great many) this could mean 3,000 or more titles reissued out of some fifteen to twenty thousand sides issued before 1942 on 78-rpm discs. This suggests that much of the cream has been skimmed off the barrel. But blues reissues are not slowing down. New releases must strive for something to attract the bewildered prospective buyer, who sees bins full of reissues in the specialty record shops and long lists on the pages of the mail-order-house order forms. It is not enough to offer, now, a reissue that does not duplicate previous reissues, since, in many cases that would suggest that second- and third-rate releases are being featured. Cleaner copies, with better technical reproduction are desiderata, but I doubt that they lure large numbers of purchasers. Better packaging, with more intelligent notes are virtues, but again I suspect that handsome booklets sell few records: most buyers buy to listen, not to read. Educational matter must be smuggled into the customer's house almost without his knowledge. Librarians, though, may react very differently, and the factors whose importance I minimized for the average individual buyer may play a large role in the case of institutional purchasers. JEMF's own corporate philosophy has been that while the sound recording itself is the carrot at the end of the stick, the educational paraphernalia are the real *raison d'être* for the package. This philosophy is not always consistent with commercial success.

These assorted thoughts cross my mind as I review this impressive series of blues reissues produced between 1977 and 1981 in England. Sixteen albums of sixteen cuts each have been issued, and the producers are now calling for a respite, at least temporarily, before any more are issued. A review of the entire series, then, is timely. The collection has been edited and produced by collector Francis Smith using (almost) only original 78s from his own collection. Few, if any, other record companies have relied on the vaults of a single collector, but in this case this precondition does not seem to have been detrimental: Smith's collection seems not only prodigious, but well stocked with 78s in extraordinarily clean condition. In his introductory "Forward" on the jacket of the first LP (PY4401) Smith summarizes

his own view of the project: "The well-merited reissue of so many excellent blues guitar records over the past few years has had, perhaps, one unfortunate and unintentional side-effect in that it caused the pianist to be unfairly overshadowed. This album marks the start of a series which, it is hoped, will put into perspective the role of the piano in blues history and do justice to the memory of the many fine pianists who have so enriched the music....The selection of records both here and throughout the series will be essentially subjective and reflect my own taste, but I shall endeavor to include a wide-ranging variety of piano styles and treatments to give as broad as possible a picture of the whole blues piano scene."

Annotations to each album are confined to the back-jacket liner, which includes the essential discographic data (artists, title, master number, recording date and place, but not release label/numbers), a short foreword by Smith, and further of some 1500 word length notes by either Bob Hall and Richard Noblett, or Paul Oliver. The latter commentaries sketch briefly what is known about the artists (often not much), discuss the significance of the styles or of the material, and place artists and performances in musical and social context. The album jackets feature a uniform cover design--discreet but unexciting.

The first three volumes of the series are devoted to pre-Depression recordings, each focusing on a single record label: Paramount (PY 4401), Brunswick (PY 4402), and Vocalion (PY 4403). (Recordings on other labels--Victor, Columbia, OKeh, Gennett, Decca--are heard on other albums in the series, but attention is not drawn to them so directly, suggesting that these reissues are not legitimized by contractual agreement with the original owners.) Vol. 1 demonstrates that on piano blues Paramount excelled, as it did in other forms of blues and gospel music in the 1920s. All the cuts on this album have been reissued previously, but mostly on now-out-of-print Riverside or London LPs. Leroy Garnett's "Louisiana Glide" is still available on three other LPs, but it is such a stunning raggy piano piece that no one can complain about the redundancy. (The tune is the same as Alonzo Yancey's "Everybody's Rag.") Other highlights include the Blind Blake/Charlie Spand guitar/piano duet, "Hastings St.," and Little

MAGPIE PY4401

'whip it to a jelly'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME ONE**  
 COUNT 1928-30

A 1 CHARLIE SPAND	Meanin' The Blues (15455) vcl/pno, acc Blind Blake gtr	Richmond 17 Aug 1929	1 CHARLIE AVERY	Dearborn St. Breakdown (21438) pno solo	Chicago c. Oct 1929	B
2 BLIND LEROY GARNETT	Chain 'Em Down (15765) pno solo, James Wiggins speech	Richmond 12 Oct 1929	2 CHARLIE SPAND	Mississippi Blues (134-2) vcl/pno	Grafton c. Nov 1929	
3 LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY	No Special Ride Blues (1501-1) vcl/pno	Grafton c. Sep 1930	3 WILL EZEZELL	Heifer Dust (21145-2) pno solo	Chicago c. Feb 1929	
4 WELSEY WALLACE	Red Hot Los Blues (1185-11) pno solo	Grafton c. Feb 1930	4 LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY	Vicksburg Blues (1502-1) vcl/pno	Grafton c. Sep 1930	
5 LOUISE JOHNSON	By The Moon And Stars (1420-2) vcl/pno	Grafton 28 May 1930	5 WESLEY WALLACE	No. 22 (1184-2) vcl/pno	Grafton c. Feb 1930	
6 WILLEZELL	Pitkin's Google (115650) gtr & tmbone	Richmond 20 Sep 1929	6 JAMES WIDDIGINS	Forty-Four Blues (16768) vcl/acc Blind Leroy Gernert pno	Richmond 12 Oct 1929	
7 BLIND LEROY GARNETT	Louisiana Glide (15767) pno solo	Richmond 12 Oct 1929	7 HENRY BROWN	Henry Brown Blues (15450) pno solo	Richmond 16 Aug 1929	
8 BLIND BLAKE - CHARLIE SPAND	Hastings St. (15457) Spand pno, Blake talking, gtr	Richmond 17 Aug 1929	8 LOUISE JOHNSON	All Night Long Blues (1598-1) vcl/pno Son House, Willie Brown speech	Grafton 28 May 1930	

Series edited and produced by Francis Smith

'nothing but a worried mind'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME TWO**  
 BRUNSWICK 1928-30

A 1 LUCILLE BDGAN	Alley Boogie (C-5563-A1)	vcl/acc Charles Avery pno Chicago c. Mar 1930	1 HENRY BROWN	Stamp 'Em Down To The Bricks (C-3453-1) acc Lawrence Casey gtr/speech	Chicago 9 May 1929	B
2 CHARLES 'SPECK' PERTUM	Damblers Blues (C-4677-1)	acc Eddie Miller pno vcl Chicago c. 19 Oct 1929	2 EDDIE MILLER	Dood Jally Blues (C-4679-1)	Chicago c. 19 Oct 1929	
3 JOHN OSCAR	Whoopie Mama Blues (C-6437)	vcl prob own pno	3 LUCILLE BDGAN	New Way Blues (C-2418-1)	prob Cow Cow Davenport pno	
4 FREDDIE REDD' NICHOLSON	You Wanna Miss Me Blues (C-5561-1)	Charles Avery pno, vcl prob Chicago c. 10 Oct 1930	4 FREDDIE 'REDD' NICHOLSON	Freddie's Got The Blues (C-6064)	vcl/acc Charles Avery pno Chicago 1 Aug 1929	
5 EDDIE MILLER	Freight Train Blues (C-4680-A1)	vcl pno	5 CHARLES 'SPECK' PERTUM	Harvest Moon Blues (C-4678-1)	Charles McFadden vcl acc Eddie Miller pno	
6 SHORTY GEORGE	Jones Law Blues (C-4109-1)	James 'Stump' Johnson vcl pno acc Tampa Red gtr	6 MARY JOHNSON	Down Of Way Blues (C-5567-1)	vcl/acc Judson Brown pno Tampa Red gtr	
7 CHARLES 'SPECK' PERTUM	Weak Eyed Blues (C-4674-1)	acc Eddie Miller pno	7 EDDIE MILLER	School Day Blues (C-4880-1-A)	vcl/pno Chicago c. Nov 1924	
8 BOB CALL	31 Blues (C-5028-1)	pno solo	8 MOZELLE ALDERSON	Tight In Chicago (C-5711-1)	vcl/acc Judson Brown pno Chicago 17 Apr 1928	

Series edited and produced by Francis Smith

'shake your wicked knees'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME THREE**  
 VICTOR LION 1928-1930

A 1 COW COW DAVENPORT	Back In The Alley (C-3418-1)	pno solo	1 LIL JOHNSON	House Rent Scuffle (C-3769-1)	vcl/acc Charles Avery pno	B
2 BERT M. MAYS	Michigan River Blues (C-2399-1)	vcl/pno	2 MONTANA TAYLOR	Detroit Rocks (C-3358-A)	pno solo	
3 JDE DEAN (From Bowlin Green)	I'm So Glad I'm Twenty One Years Old Today (C-5991-1)	vcl/pno Chicago c. 7 Aug 1930	3 TAMPA RED	Black Hearted Blues (C-5633-1)	vcl/pno, acc Bill O'Bryant pno	
4 LEE GREEN	Memphis Fives (C-5178-1)	vcl/pno	4 PINETOP SMITH	Jump Steady Blues (C-2799-A)	Chicago c. Mar 1930 Maya Williams speech	
5 JIM CLARKE	Fat Fanny Stomp (C-5079-1)	pno solo/speech	5 JDE DEAN (From Bowlin Green)	Mexico Bound Blues (C-6034-1)	vcl/pno	
6 CDW COW DAVENPORT	Cow Cow Blues (C-2063-A1)	pno solo	8 RDMEO NELSON	Head Red Hop (C-4300-1)	Chicago c. 16 Jul 1930 pno solo/speech	
7 ROMED NELSON	Gettin' Dirty Just Shakin' That Thing (C-4628-1)	vcl acc unknown pno	7 COW COW DAVENPORT	Texas Shout (C-3531-1)	pno solo	
8 OAN STEWART	New Orleans Blues (C-4921-1)	vcl acc unknown pno	8 MONTANA TAYLOR & THE JAZZ BOYS	Whoop And Holler Stomp (C-3360-1)	pno solo	

Series edited and produced by Francis Smith

'give it to me good, Mr Hersal'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME FOUR**  
 THE THOMAS FAMILY 1925-1929

A 1 HODCIEL THOMAS	Worried Down With The Blues (9167-A1)	vcl/pno	1 MDANIN' BERNICE EDWARDS	Long Tell Mama (20362-1)	vcl/pno	B
2 BIPPIE WALLACE	Murder's Gonna Be My Crime (73-565-8)	vcl/pno	2 MDANIN' BERNICE EDWARDS	Mean Man Blues (20361-1)	vcl/pno	
3 GEORGE THOMAS	Fast Stuff Blues (17-21)	vcl/pno, acc unknown pno	3 HERAL THOMAS	Suitcase Blues (8958-A)	pno solo	
4 HODCIEL THOMAS	Fish Tail Dance (9168-A1)	vcl/acc Heral Thomas pno	4 MDANIN' BERNICE EDWARDS	Jack Of All Trades (21024-1)	vcl/pno	
5 MOANIN' BERNICE	High Powered Mama Blues (21001-51)	vcl/pno	5 MOANIN' BERNICE	Moaning Blues (20371-1)	vcl/pno	
6 GEORGE THOMAS	Don't Kill Him In Hara (18-21)	vcl/pno, acc unknown gtr	6 HERAL THOMAS	Hersel Blues (9166-A)	pno solo	
7 MOANIN' BERNICE	Southbound Blues (21011-41)	vcl/pno	7 MDANIN' BERNICE	Hard Hunting Blues (21000-4)	vcl/pno	
8 MDANIN' BERNICE EDWARDS	Born To Die Blues (21011-41)	vcl/pno	8 MDANIN' BERNICE EDWARDS	Low Down Dirty Sheme Blues (21010-4)	vcl/pno	

Series edited and produced by Francis Smith

'hot box is on my mind'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME FIVE**  
 POSTSCRIPT 1927-1933

A 1 LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY	Frisco Hi-Ball Blues (C-6890-B1)	vcl/pno	1 COW COW DAVENPORT	Atlanta Rag (14986-A)	pno solo	B
2 TURNER PARRISH	Tranches (18958-A1)	pno solo	2 PINETOP & LINDBERG	"4-14-4" (71622-11)	Richmond 1 Apr 1929 Manan Spunks vcl	
3 RODSEVELT SYKES	"44" Blues (402451-A1)	vcl/pno	3 LDONNIE CLARK	Down In Tennessee (15661)	acc Aaron Sparks pno Atlanta 25 Feb 1932 vcl prob own	
4 RUFUS & BEN DULLIAN with JAMES McCRARY	Holy Roll (151994-11)	vcl/trio	4 SKIP JAMES	If You Haven't Any Hay Get On Down The Road (L-765-1)	pno acc unknown mand. Richmond 27 Sep 1929 vcl prob own	
5 JAMES 'BAT' ROBINSON	Humming Blues (17635-D1)	vcl/pno	5 CHARLIE SPAND	Soon This Morning No. 2 (L-505-2)	vcl/pno	
6 SPECKLED RED	Wilkins Street Stomp (M-188-D1)	pno solo	6 HERVE DUERSON	Avenue Strut (15508-B)	Grafton c. Sep 1930 pno solo	
7 SAMMY BROWN	The Jockey Blues (GEK-970-B1)	vcl/pno	7 JAMES (STUMP) JOHNSON	Bound To Be A Monkey (315)	Richmond 29 Aug 1929 pno solo/speech	
8 MOZELLE ALDERSON	Hot Whoopie (C-5599-1)	vcl/pno	8 KIDFISH BILL TDMLIN	Hot Box (L-620-1)	Long Island City c. Jan 1929 vcl prob own pno	

Series edited and produced by Francis Smith

MAGPIE PY4404

MAGPIE PY4405

'take your big legs off'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME SIX  
 WALTER ROLAND 1933-1935**

A 1 JOLLY JIVERS	Piano Stomp (13593-2)	Walter Roland piano, Sonny Scott speech/taping, New York 19 Jul 1933	1 WALTER ROLAND	House Lady Blues (13593-2)	New York 19 Jul 1933
2 WALTER ROLAND	Early This Morning (about Brook of Oey) (13601-2)	vcl pro, New York 20 Jul 1933	2 WALTER ROLAND	Every Morning Blues (15621-2)	New York 2 Aug 1934
3 LUCILLE BOGAN	Changed Ways Blues (11519-1)	vcl ecc White Roland piano, New York 2 Aug 1934	3 WALTER ROLAND	Collector Man Blues (15493-1)	New York 31 Aug 1934
4 WALTER ROLAND	Back Door Blues (13584-1)	vcl pro, New York 19 Jul 1933	4 LUCILLE BOGAN	Down In Boogie Alley (15508-2)	vcl ecc. Walter Roland piano, New York 1 Aug 1934
5 WALTER ROLAND	Big Mama (15520-2)	vcl pro, New York 2 Aug 1934	5 JOLLY JIVERS	Watcha Gonna Do (13594-1)	Roland, Bogen, Scott, jcl, acc Roland piano, New York 19 Jul 1933
6 WALTER ROLAND	Red Cross Blues (13550-2)	vcl pro, New York 17 Jul 1933	6 WALTER ROLAND	Bed Dream Blues (16968-1)	New York 5 Mar 1936
7 LUCILLE BOGAN	B.D. Woman's Blues (16991-2)	vcl ecc Walter Roland piano, New York 7 Mar 1935	7 LUCILLE BOGAN	Blew Meast Blues (17013-1)	vcl ecc. Walter Roland piano, New York 8 Mar 1935
8 JOLLY JIVERS	Jookit Jookit (13582-1)	Roland piano, Sonny Scott speech, New York 19 Jul 1933	8 JOLLY JIVERS	Hungry Men's Scuffle (113806-1)	Roland piano, L. Bogen, S. Scott speech, Scott taping, New York 20 Jul 1933

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House Lady Blues (13593-2)	House Lady Blues (13593-2)
New York 19 Jul 1933	vcl pro
Every Morning Blues (15621-2)	vcl pro
New York 2 Aug 1934	rec
Collector Man Blues (15493-1)	New York 31 Aug 1934
Down In Boogie Alley (15508-2)	vcl ecc. Walter Roland piano, New York 1 Aug 1934
Watcha Gonna Do (13594-1)	Roland, Bogen, Scott, jcl, acc Roland piano, New York 19 Jul 1933
Bed Dream Blues (16968-1)	vcl pro
New York 5 Mar 1936	rec
Blew Meast Blues (17013-1)	vcl ecc. Walter Roland piano, New York 8 Mar 1935
Hungry Men's Scuffle (113806-1)	Roland piano, L. Bogen, S. Scott speech, Scott taping, New York 20 Jul 1933

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'don't cry when I'm gone'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME SEVEN  
 LEROY CARR 1930-1935**

A 1 LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	Gospel House Women No 2 (15633-2)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, New York 15 Aug 1934	1. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	Take A Walk Around The Corner (15604-2)	vcl pro
2. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	Good Women Blues (15427-1)	vcl pro, acc probably Josh White gtr, New York 14 Dec 1934	2. LEROY CARR	New How Long How Long Blues Pt.2 (C-7221-A)	vcl pro
3. LEROY CARR	Ain't It A Shame (18551-1)	vcl pro, Chicago 25 Feb 1935	3. LEROY CARR	Four O'Clock Rider (C-6059)	vcl pro
4. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	George Street Blues (15648-2)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, New York 16 Aug 1934	4. LEROY CARR	Rockin' In My Bed (15458-1)	vcl pro
5. LEROY CARR	Just A Reg (15513-1)	vcl pro, Chicago 25 Feb 1935	5. LEROY CARR	Sloppy Drunk Blues (C-6066-B)	vcl pro
6. LEROY CARR	Aliebene Women Blues (C-8091-1)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, Chicago 19 Sep 1930	6. LEROY CARR	Going Back Home (65615-1)	Chicago 25 Feb 1935
7. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	I Believe I'll Make A Change (15645-2)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, New York 16 Aug 1934	7. LEROY CARR	Big Four Blues (16598-1)	vcl pro
8. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	Don't Start No Stuff (16477-1)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, New York 16 Aug 1934	8. LEROY CARR with SCRAPPER BLACKWELL	It's Too Short (16440-1)	vcl pro, acc Scrapper Blackwell gtr, Josh White 2nd gtr, New York 17 Dec 1934

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'stomp the grinder down'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME EIGHT  
 SEAPORT 1934-1935**

A 1 ROB COOPER	West Dallas Drag (82795)	pno solo, San Antonio, 3 Apr 1934	1 ROB COOPER	West Dallas Drag No. 2 (87754-1)	pno solo, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
2 ANDY BOY	Teo Lets Blues (107241-1)	vcl pro, San Antonio 24 Feb 1937	2 ANDY BOY	Yellow Gal Blues (107246-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
3 JOE PULLUM	Careful Drivin' Mama (187752)	vcl pro, acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935	3 WALTER (COWBOY) WASHINGTON	Ice Pick Mama (107249-1)	acc Andy Boy piano, San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
4 WALTER (COWBOY) WASHINGTON	West Dallas Woman (10750-11)	vcl pro, acc Andy Boy piano, San Antonio 24 Feb 1937	4 JOE PULLUM	Rock It Back And Tell It Right (187751)	acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
5 JOE PULLUM - ROBERT COOPER	Blues With Class (17751)	pno solo, speech by Joe Pullum, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935	5 ANDY BOY	Church Street Blues (10742-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
6 ANDY BOY	Evil Blues (107239-11)	vcl pro, San Antonio 24 Feb 1937	6 JOE PULLUM	Mississippi Flood Blues (10773-11)	acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
7 JOE PULLUM	Cows, See That Train Comin' (187783)	vcl pro, acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio, 3 Apr 1934	7 ANDY BOY	Lonesome With The Blues (107244-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
8 ANDY BOY	House Rain Blues (107240-11)	vcl pro	8 JOE PULLUM	McKinney Street Stomp (82784-1)	pno solo Rob Cooper

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'what's the use of gettin' sober'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME NINE  
 LOFTON/NOBLE 1935-1936**

A 1 CRIPPLE CLARENCE LOFTON	Brown Skin Girlie (C1074A)	vcl pro, acc Big Bill Broonzy gtr, Chicago 18 July 1936	1 GEORGE NOBLE	If You Lose Your Good Girl - Don't Mess With Mine (C3194)	vcl pro, Chicago 20 Jul 1936
2 CRIPPLE CLARENCE LOFTON	You Done Tore Your Playhouse Down (C1075A)	vcl pro, acc Big Bill Broonzy gtr, Chicago 18 July 1936	2 GEORGE NOBLE	T.B. Blues (C2020A)	vcl pro, Chicago 20 Jul 1936
3 REO NELSON	Crying Mother Blues (B0597A)	vcl pro, acc Cripple Clarence Lofton piano, Chicago 4 Feb 1935	3 GEORGE NOBLE	On My Death Bed (C996-2)	vcl pro, Chicago 11 Feb 1935
4 REO NELSON	When The Soldiers Get Their Bonus (190605A)	vcl pro, acc Cripple Clarence Lofton piano, Al Miller gtr, Chicago 4 Feb 1936	4 GEORGE NOBLE	Sissy Man Blues (C911C)	vcl pro, Chicago 20 Mar 1935
5 REO NELSON	Sweeter Thing Blues (190605A)	vcl pro, acc Cripple Clarence Lofton piano, Al Miller gtr, Chicago 4 Feb 1936	5 GEORGE NOBLE	New Milk Cow Blues (C895-1)	vcl pro, Chicago 11 Feb 1935
6 REO NELSON	Streamline Train (100598)	vcl pro, acc Cripple Clarence Lofton piano, Chicago 4 Feb 1936	6 GEORGE NOBLE	Bed Springs Blues (C910C)	vcl pro, Chicago 20 Mar 1935
7 CRIPPLE CLARENCE LOFTON	Monkey Man Blues (C984A)	vcl pro, acc Big Bill Broonzy gtr, Chicago 2 Apr 1935	7 GEORGE NOBLE	Oozing Blues (C898-2)	vcl pro, Chicago 11 Feb 1935
8 CRIPPLE CLARENCE LOFTON	Strut That Thing (C9478)	vcl pro, acc unknown traps, Chicago 2 Apr 1936	8 GEORGE NOBLE	The Seminole Blues (C807-2)	vcl pro, Chicago 11 Feb 1935

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1 ROB COOPER	West Dallas Drag No. 2 (87754-1)	pno solo, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
2 ANDY BOY	Yellow Gal Blues (107246-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
3 WALTER (COWBOY) WASHINGTON	Ice Pick Mama (107249-1)	acc Andy Boy piano, San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
4 JOE PULLUM	Rock It Back And Tell It Right (187751)	acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
5 ANDY BOY	Church Street Blues (10742-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
6 JOE PULLUM	Mississippi Flood Blues (10773-11)	acc Rob Cooper piano, San Antonio 29 Jan 1935
7 ANDY BOY	Lonesome With The Blues (107244-1)	San Antonio 24 Feb 1937
8 JOE PULLUM	McKinney Street Stomp (82784-1)	pno solo Rob Cooper

MAGPIE PY4409

'that's where I was born'\*  
**THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME TEN  
 TERRITORY BLUES 1934-1941**

A 1 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Hittin' The Battle Stomp (HAT 139-1)	Roseland Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936	1 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Skippy Whippy (HAT140-2)	Roseland Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936
2 BIG BOY KNOX	Texas Blues (107480-11)	Sen Antonio, Tex 2 Mar 1937	2 BLINO MACK	Keep Your Good Woman Home (JAX177-2)	Hartford, Conn. 16 Jul 1936
3 CURTIS HENRY	G-Men Blues (107029-11)	vcl pro.	3 BIG BOY KNOX	Poor Man Blues (107478-1)	Kid Stormy Weather piano, Jackson, Miss. 17 Oct 1935
4 PEANUT THE KIDNAPPER	Silver Spuds Blues (1629-11)	James Sherrill vcl, acc Robert McCay piano, unk gtr, Birmingham, Ala 25 Mar 1937	4 CURTIS HENRY	County Jail Blues (107030-1)	Texarkana, Tex 15 Feb 1937
5 JAZZBO TOMMY & HIS LOWLANDERS	Blaze Fave, Gav (14881-2)	Emekel Lewis piano, Lee Buckley gtr, Leon Springs Ark 18 Mar 1937	5 OUSKY DAILEY	Flying Crow Blues (SA2777-3)	Texarkana, Tex 4 Dec 1937
6 FRANK TANNEMILL	Rolling Stone Blues (103207-11)	vcl pro, Dallas, Texas 3 Apr 1941	6 PEANUT THE KIDNAPPER	Eight Avenue Blues (B60-11)	James Sherrill vcl, acc Robert McCay piano, unk gtr, Birmingham, Ala 1 Apr 1937
7 MACK RHINEHART & BROWNE STUBBLEFIELD	T.P.N. Moener (C1627-2)	vcl, piano, drums, bass, unk gtr, Birmingham, Ala 27 Oct 1936	7 ALFONCY HARRIS	South Land Blues (SA1183-11)	Sen Antonio, Tex 10 Oct 1934
8 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Barbecue Bust (HAT145-3)	Roseland Graves piano, Uray Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936	8 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Dangerous Woman (HAT141-3)	Roseland Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936

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1 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Skippy Whippy (HAT140-2)	Roseland Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936
2 BLINO MACK	Keep Your Good Woman Home (JAX177-2)	Hartford, Conn. 16 Jul 1936
3 BIG BOY KNOX	Poor Man Blues (107478-1)	Kid Stormy Weather piano, Jackson, Miss. 17 Oct 1935
4 CURTIS HENRY	County Jail Blues (107030-1)	Texarkana, Tex 15 Feb 1937
5 OUSKY DAILEY	Flying Crow Blues (SA2777-3)	Texarkana, Tex 4 Dec 1937
6 PEANUT THE KIDNAPPER	Eight Avenue Blues (B60-11)	James Sherrill vcl, acc Robert McCay piano, unk gtr, Birmingham, Ala 1 Apr 1937
7 ALFONCY HARRIS	South Land Blues (SA1183-11)	Sen Antonio, Tex 10 Oct 1934
8 MISSISSIPPI JOOK BAND	Dangerous Woman (HAT141-3)	Roseland Graves piano, Cooney Vaughn piano, Herbiesburg, Mass. c. 16 Jul 1936

'there's a train leavin' Houston'\*  
 THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME ELEVEN  
 TEXAS SANTA FE 1934-1937

A 1 SON BECKY	Midnight Trouble Blues (SA2765-11) vcl piano unknown gtr San Antonio 25 Oct 1937	1 PINETOP BURKS	Mountain Jack Blues (SA2759-11) San Antonio 25 Oct 1937
2 BLACK BOY SHINE	Dog House Blues (SA2562-11) San Antonio 20 Nov 1935	2 BLACK BOY SHINE	Brown House Blues (SA2566-2) San Antonio 20 Nov 1935
3 BLACK IVORY KING	Working For The PWA (51736A) 15 Chicago 15 Feb 1937	3 BERNICE EDWARDS	Butcher Shop Blues (PW1174-1) Fort Worth 21 Apr 1935
4 PINETOP BURKS	Farmie Mae Blues (SA2762-2) San Antonio 25 Oct 1937	4 PINETOP BURKS	Jack Of All Trades Blues (SA2761-1) San Antonio 25 Oct 1937
5 ALFONCY HARRIS	Absent Freight Train Blues (SA1182-11) vcl. acc unknown piano and gtr San Antonio 25 Oct 1934	5 BLACK IVORY KING	Gingham Dress (Alexander Blues) (61736A) vcl piano Chicago 15 Feb 1937
6 PINETOP BURKS	Aggravatin' Mama Blues (SA2760-11) San Antonio 25 Oct 1934	6 SON BECKY	Cryin' Shama Blues (SA2757-11) vcl. piano acc unknown gtr San Antonio 25 Oct 1937
7 SON BECKY	Sweet Woman Blues (SA2763-11) San Antonio 25 Oct 1934	7 BLACK BOY SHINE	Sell On Little Girl No. 3 (DAL307-2) Dallas 14 June 1937
8 BERNICE EDWARDS, BLACK BOY SHINE & HOWLING SMITH	Hot Mattress Stomp (FW1172-3) Edward, Shene, Smith pr Fort Worth 20 Apr 1935	8 PINETOP BURKS	Sun Down Blues (SA2763-11) San Antonio 25 Oct 1937

'will satisfy your mind'\*

THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME TWELVE  
 BIG FOUR 1933-1941

A 1 LITTLE BROTHER	Parish Street Jive 102656-11 New Orleans 16 Oct 1936	1 LITTLE BROTHER	Shreveport Farewell (102658-1) New Orleans 16 Oct 1936
2 WALTER QAVIS	Big Jack Engine Blues (016514-1) vcl. piano acc. Henry Townsend gtr. Aurora, IL 11 Nov 1937	2 SPRINGBACK JAMES	Snake Oil Blues (196741) Richmond, Ind 23 Aug 1934
3 ROOSEVELT SYKES	Big Leggs Ida Blue (77302-1) Chicago 11 Dec 1933	3 WALTER DAVIS	Sweet Sixteen (85484-1) prob. Joe Williams, Henry Townsend gtr. Chicago 25 Feb 1935
4 SPRINGBACK JAMES	Will My Bad Luck Ever Change? (01899-1) vcl. piano acc. Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 21 Dec 1936	4 ROOSEVELT SYKES	Let Ma Hang My Stocking In Your Christmas Tree (91319A1) vcl. piano Chicago 29 Oct 1937
5 LITTLE BROTHER	Vicksburg Blues - Part 3 (02645-11) New Orleans 16 Oct 1936	5 SPRINGBACK JAMES	Poor Coal Loader (90153A1) vcl. piano acc. Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 15 Jul 1935
6 RODSEVELT SYKES	Low As A Toad (93523A1) Chicago 27 Feb 1941	6 LITTLE BROTHER	Louisiana Blues - Part 2 (02646-1) New Orleans 16 Oct 1936
7 SPRINGBACK JAMES	New Red Cross Blues (101899-1) vcl. piano acc. Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 21 Dec 1936	7 SPRINGBACK JAMES	See For Yourself! (01888-1) vcl. piano acc. Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 21 Dec 1936
8 WALTER QAVIS	I Can Tell By The Way You Smile (81432-11) vcl. piano acc. Henry Townsend gtr. Chicago 29 Jul 1935	8 WALTER QAVIS	Frisco Blues (070456-11) vcl. piano solo Chicago 5 Dec 1941

'pull up your dress, babe'\*

THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME THIRTEEN  
 CENTRAL HIGHWAY 1933-1941

A 1 GEORIA A WHITE	The Blues Ain't Nothin' But... (719545A) vcl. piano acc. Ike Robinson gtr. John Lindsay bass. Chicago 27 Oct 1938	1 HONEY HILL	Boogie Woogie (84225-1) vcl. piano solo New York 24 Jan 1936
2 LEE OREEN	The Way I Feel (02486A) New York 3 Aug 1937	2 TAMPA REO	Stormy Sea Blues (100330-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 3 Apr 1936
3 MONKEY JOE	New York Central (12292-1) acc. both Willie B. James gtr. unknown bass. Chicago 8 Sep 1939	3 EDDIE MILLER	Whoopie! (C1666-21) vcl. piano solo Chicago 12 Nov 1936
4 PEETIE WHEATSTRAW	Shaky Bullie Stamp (63529A) vcl. piano acc. Lonnie Johnson pr. unk. drums, bass Chicago 1 Apr 1938	4 MEMPHIS MINNIE, BLACK BOB, BILL BETTLES	Joe Louis Strut (C1661-A1) vcl. gtr. acc. Black Bob pr. Bill Bettles bass. Chicago 22 Aug 1935
5 STUMP JOHNSON	Don't Give My Lard Away (78951-1) vcl. piano acc. Willie C. Stone gtr. Chicago 2 Aug 1933	5 PINETOP	Tell Her About Me (91429-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Milton Sparks, or Henry Townsend gtr. Chicago 29 Jul 1935
6 EDDIE MORGAN	Rock House Blues (80963-1) vcl. piano acc. both Willie B. James gtr. Chicago 1 Nov 1934	6 HARRY "FREEOOE" SHAYNE	Lonesome Man Blues (90534-A1) vcl. piano solo Chicago 19 Dec 1935
7 PINETOP	Every Day I Have The Blues (91440-1) vcl. piano acc. Milton Sparks or Henry Townsend gtr. Chicago 28 Jul 1935	7 POMEAT TERRY	Black Sheep Blues (90162-A1) vcl. piano solo Chicago 16 Jul 1935
8 QUITRICE & FRANKIE BLACK	Stamp Stomp (90090A) vcl. piano solo acc. Scrapper Blackwell gtr. Chicago 8 Jul 1935	8 GEORGIA WHITE	Tammy Blues (93577-A1) vcl. piano solo Chicago 11 Mar 1941

'play it for me'\*

THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME FOURTEEN  
 THE ACCOMPANIST 1933-1941

A 1 BUMBLE BEE SUM	New Bricks In My Pillow (C1345-1) vcl. piano acc. Myrtle Jenkins pho. Chicago 2 Apr 1938	1 BUMBLE BEE SLIM	Any Time A Night (C1345-2) vcl. piano solo acc. Myrtle Jenkins unknown gtr. Chicago 2 Apr 1938
2 STUMP JOHNSON & DGRATEHA TROWBRIDGE	Steady Grindin' (76539-1) vcl. piano acc. Pinetop Sparks pho. Chicago 2 Aug 1933	2 MARY JOHNSON	Deceitful Women Blues (C8238-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Henry Brown pho. Chicago 20 Aug 1934
3 LIL JOHNSON	I Lost My Baby (91418-1) vcl. piano acc. Black Bob pr. unknown gtr. bass. Chicago 27 Jul 1935	3 BLIND SQUIRTURNER	Pity-Pat Blues (77232-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Tom Webb pho. Chicago 9 Dec 1933
4 CARL RAFFERTY	Dresser With The Drawers (77312-1) vcl. piano acc. Black Bob pr. unk. drums, bass Chicago 25 Dec 1935	4 DGRATEHA TROWBRIDGE	Bad Luck Blues (78823-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Pinetop Sparks pho. Chicago 2 Aug 1933
5 BILL GAITHER	Georgia Woman Stamp (91420-1) vcl. piano acc. Roosevelt Sykes pho. Chicago 11 Dec 1933	5 LILJOHNSON	Keep On Knocking! (74171-1) vcl. piano solo acc. Black Bob pr. unk. drums, bass. Chicago 27 Jul 1935
6 CHARLIE McFADEEN	Times Are So Tight (76833-1) vcl. piano acc. Pinetop Sparks pho. Chicago 2 Aug 1933	6 BUMBLE BEE SLIM	Rough Treatment (C1564-2) vcl. piano solo acc. Myrtle Jenkins pho. unknown bass. Chicago 12 Nov 1935
7 JOHNNY TEMPLE	What Is That She Got? (05487-1) vcl. piano acc. Horace Malcolm pho. Chicago 17 Sep 1937	7 KANSAS CITY KITTY	Christmas Mornin' Blues (80988-1) vcl. piano solo acc. unknown pho. Chicago 1 Nov 1934
8 BUMBLE BEE SUM & MEMPHIS MINNIE	New Orleans Stop Time (C1227-2) vcl. piano acc. Casey Bill Weldon gtr. unknown tempo. Chicago 6 Feb 1936	8 BUMBLE BEE SLIM	When Somebody Loses (C-1223-2) vcl. piano solo acc. Myrtle Jenkins pho. Casey Bill Weldon gtr. Chicago 5 Feb 1936

'Elm Street's paved in brass'\*

THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME FIFTEEN  
 DALLAS 1927-1929

A 1 TEXAS BILL DAY & BILLIKEN JOHNSON	Elm Street Blues (149538-2) Bill Day vcl. piano Billiken Johnson vcl. effects. acc. Coley Jones gtr. Dallas 4 Dec 1929	1 WHISTLIN' ALEX MOORE	They May Not Be My Toes (149530-1) vcl. piano solo Dallas 5 Dec 1929
2 WHISTLIN' ALEX MOORE	Heart Wrecked Blues (149534-2) vcl. piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929	2 TEXAS BILL DAY & BILLIKEN JOHNSON	Billiken's Weary Blues (149539-2) Bill Day vcl. piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929
3 BILLIKEN JOHNSON with NEAL ROBERTS	Frisco Blues (148806-2) Neal Roberts vcl. piano Billiken Johnson vcl. effects. Dallas 5 Dec 1929	3 BILLIKEN JOHNSON with NEAL ROBERTS	Wild Jack Blues (147607-1) Neal Roberts vcl. piano Billiken Johnson vcl. effects. Dallas 5 Dec 1929
4 TEXAS BILL DAY	Coin Back To My Baby (149512-1) vcl. piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929	4 WHISTLIN' ALEX MOORE	West Texas Woman (149531-2) vcl. piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929
5 HATTIE HUOSON	Doggone My Good Luck Soul (8114538-2) vcl. piano acc. Willie Tyson pho. Dallas 6 Dec 1927	5 BOBBIE CAIILLAC	Carbolic Acid Blues (147599-2) vcl. acc. unknown piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929
6 "BILLIKIN" JOHNSON & FREED ADAMS	Sun Basin Blues (148322-1) Fred Adams vcl. Johnson vcl. effects acc. Willie Tyson pho. Oscar Gaspard bas. Dallas 3 Dec 1927	6 TEXAS BILL DAY	Burn The Trashie Down (149515-2) vcl. piano acc. Coley Jones gtr. Dallas 4 Dec 1929
7 WHISTLIN' ALEX MOORE	Blue Bloomer Blues (149563-2) vcl. piano acc. Bill Norns gtr. Dallas 6 Dec 1929	7 "BILLIKIN" JOHNSON & FREED ADAMS	Interurban Blues (149523-2) Fred Adams vcl. Johnson vcl. effects acc. Willie Tyson pho. Oscar Gaspard bas. Dallas 3 Dec 1927
8 TEXAS BILL DAY	Good Mornin' Blues (149514-2) vcl. piano acc. Coley Jones gtr. Dallas 4 Dec 1929	8 WHISTLIN' ALEX MOORE	Ice Pick Blues (149535-2) vcl. piano Dallas 5 Dec 1929

'soon this morning'\*

THE PIANO BLUES VOLUME SIXTEEN  
 CHARLIE SPAND 1929-1931

A 1 CHARLIE SPAND	Soon This Morning Blues (15151) vcl. piano acc. Blind Blake gtr. Richmond, Ind 6 Jun 1929	1 CHARLIE SPAND	Back To The Woods Blues (15456) vcl. piano acc. Blind Blake gtr. Richmond, Ind. 17 Aug 1929
2 CHARLIE SPAND	Thirsty Woman Blues (L-507-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930	2 CHARLIE SPAND	Dreamin' The Blues (L-508-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930
3 CHARLIE SPAND	Got To Have My Sweetbread (L-38-3) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Nov 1930	3 CHARLIE SPAND	Georgia Mule Blues (L-1039-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1931
4 CHARLIE SPAND	Evil Women Spell (L-1041-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1931	4 CHARLIE SPAND	Big Fat Mama Blues (L-509-1) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1931
5 CHARLIE SPAND	Good Gal! (15453) vcl. piano acc. pass. Josh White/gtr. Richmond, Ind. 17 Aug 1929	5 CHARLIE SPAND	Mis-treatment Blues (L-504-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930
6 CHARLIE SPAND	She's A Good Stuff (L-506-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930	6 CHARLIE SPAND	Levee Camp Man (L-2146-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930
7 CHARLIE SPAND	Room Rent Blues (L-102-2) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Jan 1930	7 CHARLIE SPAND	Fetch Your Water (L-1565) vcl. piano acc. Blind Blake gtr. Richmond, Ind. 5 Jun 1929
8 CHARLIE SPAND	Ain't Gonna Stand For That! (15454) vcl. piano vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930	8 CHARLIE SPAND	Hard Time Blues (L-1038-1) vcl. piano Grafton, Wis. c Sep 1930

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MAGPIE PY4415

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MAGPIE PY4416

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MAGPIE PY4417

Brother Montgomery's very popular "Vicksburg Blues," the "definitive" version of this oft-recorded theme.

The Brunswick recordings on PY4402 tend to be more mellow and more introspective, gentler, than the hard-driving, raggy or boogie-like Paramount performances of Vol. 1, reflecting, according to Smith's introductory comments, the preponderance of artists from the St. Louis area. The selections are comparatively rare, both on original 78s and on reissues (I spot only four that are elsewhere available on LP). Nicholson's "You Gonna Miss Me Blues" (with piano accompaniment by Charles Avery) is to the familiar tune of "Sitting on Top of the World." Miller's "Freight Train Blues" has little in common (except in the most general thematic way) with the better-known Thomas Dorsey song of the same title, popularized by both Clara Smith and Trixie Smith on disc. "Jones Law Blues," an interesting social commentary on prohibition, refers to the Jones-Stalker Act of 1929 which stiffened the penalties under the Volstead Act.

The Vocalion album (PY4403) includes some piano greats--Cow Cow Davenport, Pinetop Smith, Romeo Nelson, etc.--but Smith opts for less familiar recordings by them. Nevertheless, at least six cuts on this LP are still available on previously released LP reissues. Davenport's "Back in the Alley" contains some phrases heard also in his famous "Cow Cow Blues;" and his marvelous "Texas Shout" (very similar to his "Atlanta Rag," heard on PY4405) is a variant of Carey Morgan's 1911 composition, "Trilby Rag." There are fine boogie performances by the lesser known artists as well--especially Joe Dean and Jim Clarke.

Vol. 4 is devoted to five pianists from one Houston, Texas, family: brothers and sister Hersal and George Thomas and Sippie Wallace; George's daughter, Hociel; and Bernice Edwards, brought up as a member of the family. George, the oldest of those heard here, was one of the first pianists to play (and compose) with the boogie woogie bass figures. Hersal, the youngest (age fifteen at the time of his lovely solos, "Suitcase Blues" and "Hersal Blues") died in 1926 of food poisoning. Bernice, a real moaning blues singer who accompanied herself, performed in a slow, relaxed, almost tranquilizing style. Very few of these sides have been previously reissued on LP.

Vol. 5 was to wrap up the 1920s and early Depression years with a fine collection of hard-driving pianists. Sykes's "44 Blues," Davenport's "Atlanta Rag," and James's "If You Haven't Any Hay" are all available elsewhere but are superb pieces that deserve a place in any piano blues collection. "Holy Roll" is a nice rendition of a 1920s Charleston (the tune of "Five Foot Two" is almost identical). "Trenches" is a nice boogie, but with an unusually square left hand. Other first rate performances by the oft-recorded Montgomery and Speckled Red, and the rarely heard

Clark, vocalist Alderson, and Tomlin add to this album's delights--perhaps the best in the series in terms of hard-driving instrumental piano blues. Tomlin's "Hot Box," with its traditional railroad imagery, is, uncharacteristically, from a very beat-up 78; but this may be excusable as it is reported to be the only known copy.

Vols 6 and 7 are each devoted to a single artist: Walter Roland (PY4406) and Leroy Carr (PY4407), both artists whose careers have been well represented on LP reissues (and at least half of the combined titles on these two LPs have appeared on previous reissues). Roland was a fine pianist (and guitarist) who could play in a variety of styles: fast boogie (e.g., "Jookit Jookit"), barrelhouse ("Piano Stomp"), slow blues ("Bad Dream Blues"), hokum ("Whatcha Gonna Do"), and as accompanist (on the four cuts featuring vocalist Lucille Bogan). It is difficult to single out one or two outstanding pieces, but I particularly enjoyed "Big Mama," the tune of which is very similar to "Memphis Fives" (on PY 4403) and also to Memphis Minnie's "Plymouth Rock Blues." Carr's piano style was also variegated, and in their liner notes Hall and Noblett remark that his key preference suggests formal musical training. Blackwell and Carr were one of the best-mated guitar/piano blues teams to record, and though the chorded piano fills more of the sound than the single-string guitar picking, Blackwell's accompaniment is tastefully conceived and perfectly executed. Duplication with previous LP reissues (there have been three devoted entirely to the duo) is particularly obvious on this album.

By contrast, very little of Vols. 8 and 11, both devoted to sundry Texas pianists, has been previously reissued. (Cooper's two raggy versions of "West Dallas Drag" are a notable exception.) In fact, little, if any, of most of these artists has been available on LP. Paul Oliver, whose liner notes to both these albums stress the socio-economic backgrounds to the music, also draws attention to the pre-blues elements in the music of some of these Texas barrelhouse pianists. He notes that Washington's "West Dallas Woman" uses the traditional tune that was also the source of Hart Wand's 1912 composition, "Dallas Blues"--the first published song with "blues" in the title. One might also note that this tune is quite similar to Leroy Carr's best-known composition, "How Long Blues." Andy Boy ("Boy" was his real surname) also borrowed on older themes in his clever "House Raid Blues," with its elements of "Long Gone (from Bowling Green)."

Vol. 9 is divided between two pianists—Clarence Lofton and George Noble, both (probably) active in Chicago in the 1930s. Neither artist recorded very much, and this LP includes all of what sides they cut for the race market (Lofton recorded again for an urban jazz audience after 1939). Most of Lofton's numbers have been reissued previously; few of Noble's have. Four of the Lofton sides feature vocalist Red Nelson with Lofton's piano accompaniment. Many of the songs

are reworkings of older blues, as Hall and Noblett note in the liner notes. Among the topical themes are "When the Soldiers Get Their Bonus," referring to a 1936 payment to World War I veterans; "T.B. Blues," one of many songs from the 1920s about the now-nearly-eradicated disease; and "Sissy Man Blues" about homosexuality. "Dozing Blues" is a version of the traditional "Dozens."

Vol. 10, "Territory Blues," features "a selection of...artists, most of whom never left the South, and whose uncommercial mood is doubtless the reason for the extreme rarity of their original 78s...." The mainstream of blues recording artists had grown greatly in sophistication, professionalization, and urbanity (as was the case at the same time--the mid-1930s--in the white hillbilly music field), and record companies made an effort to recapture some of the freshness and vigor of downhome artists, whom they recorded on a succession of field trips to smaller Southern metropolitan areas, including Jackson and Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Charlotte, North Carolina; Hot Springs, Arkansas; and Birmingham, Alabama, the sources of some of the sides re-issued on this LP. With the exception of the four rousing sides by the Mississippi Jook Band, very few of the selections are elsewhere available on LP. Nor were these artists very successful on disc in their day: none (the Jook Band excluded) had more than twelve sides issued, and few biographical details are available in most cases. By contrast, Vol. 13 "dip(s) into the broad mainstream of piano blues" from the same period. The artists range from the extremely popular and oft-recorded--Wheatstraw, Pine Top (Sparks), Tampa Red--to others--Morgan, Terry--who recorded no more than two selections before retiring into obscurity. Again, few of the sides are available elsewhere on LP. Both Georgia White's "The Blues Ain't Nothin' But...???" and Peetie Wheatstraw's "Shack Bully Stomp" are fine piano-guitar duets with guitarists Ikey Robinson and Lonnie Johnson, respectively. On the other hand, guitarists Scrapper Blackwell (as Frankie Black) and Memphis Minnie, ordinarily outstanding guitarists, are almost drowned out by the vigorous piano pounding of Dot Rice and Black Bob, respectively, on their lively duets "Texas Stomp" and "Joe Louis Strut."

Vol. 12 features four major artists "who all made important and individual contributions to the music of the period": Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery, Walter Davis, Roosevelt Sykes, and Frank "Springback" James--originally from, respectively, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and (probably) Alabama, though all traveled a

good deal in their subsequent years. The album opens with what is to me one of the most exciting blues piano solos on record--Little Brother's "Parish Street Jive," with both ragtime and boogie elements. His "Shreveport Farewell," recorded the same day, is also outstanding.

On what was to have been the final LP of the series, Vol. 14, we are offered pianists as accompanists to vocalists, rather than lead performers. Unidentified on record labels and sometimes in company ledgers, several of the pianists are not known on this collection, which is chosen for the tastefulness, style and technique of the accompanists rather than their renown.

The success of the first fourteen volumes of this series was great enough that producer Smith was moved to extend it to two additional volumes, returning now to material from the 1920s. On Vol. 15 he has selected a sampling of pianists from the Dallas school. In his notes, Paul Oliver observes that the Dallas style of blues piano "is slow or medium-paced and contemplative in its nature as if in reaction against the clamorous, sometimes brutal world of its streets." Reflecting Dallas's position as an important railroad junction, there are several songs with train titles or lyrics; Billiken Johnson's vocal effects (compare Jimmie Rodgers's train whistle sounds) on "Frisco Blues" and "Sun Beam Blues" are particularly effective. Hattie Hudson's "Doggone My Good Luck Soul" uses the same moving tune that Leadbelly used for his "Silver City Bound." About half of the sixteen selections on this album have been reissued elsewhere.

The final volume of the series is devoted to a single artist, Charlie Spand, reissuing sixteen of his twenty-three issued Paramount sides (four more are on PY4401 and PY4405). Some of these sides are quite rough, but the 78s are exceedingly rare, and only a couple of tracks have been previously reissued. On some songs Spand is supported by fine guitar-work by Blind Blake or, possibly, Josh White.

In retrospect, perhaps I have dwelt too much on the question of how many of the selections on this series have already been reissued. In many cases, a second reissue, because of more intelligent planning and documentation, superannuates, rather than duplicates an earlier one. In most instances that is the case with this series. Magpie's owner Bruce Bastin, series editor Francis Smith, and annotators Bob Hall, Richard Noblett, and Paul Oliver are all to be congratulated for making this excellent series possible.

## COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC

*PATSY MONTANA SINGS HER ORIGINAL HITS FROM THE WEST* (Cattle Records LP 13; West Germany). Re-issue of twelve vocals with stringband accompaniment originally recorded in 1935-44. Titles: *I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Dream Girl*, *Swing Time Cowgirl*, *My Poncho Pony*, *Back on Montana Plains*, *I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart*, *Ridin' Old Paint*, *Lone Star*, *Old Black Mountain Trail*, *Smile and Drive Your Blues Away*, *Goodnight Soldier*, *Out on the Lone Prairie*, *Shy Little Anne from Cheyenne*. Back-jacket liner notes by Hans Dax.

It is often said that Patsy Montana's "I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart," recorded at her first session as vocalist for the Prairie Ramblers in 1935, became the first million-selling disc by a female country/western singer. I find it hard to believe that any record during the Depression years sold anywhere near a million (as far as I know it was on A&R man Art Satherley's say-so that the record was so credited); nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid that Patsy, backed by the Ramblers, were one of the most successful western groups of the 1930s. This reissue is a pretty good indication of why they were so successful: lots of hot fiddle, snappy tunes, good vocals, and the then-unusual yodeling by a female vocalist.

Born Ruby Blevins in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914, Patsy learned guitar by herself before she was into her teens, and then fell in love with the violin after hearing Fritz Kreisler play. After graduating from high school in Los Angeles (her family had moved west in 1928), she enrolled in the University of the West (now UCLA) to study violin. One day, she entered a talent contest at the Westlake Theater sponsored by a radio program called "Breakfast Club" on station KMPR. To her great surprise, her singing and guitar playing won first prize. She was then invited to appear on the radio station as a soloist, and Stuart Hamblen heard her. He had a program with two girls dubbed the "Montana Cowgirls," and she was invited to make it a trio. Thus began her career as a western singer.

Not long after she returned home for a vacation and to visit her family. Because her parents had never heard her on the radio, she went down to WKH (Shreveport) and said she'd like to be on the air. She broadcasted for two weeks, during which time Jimmie Davis heard her. He invited her to join him on his next trip to New York and accompany him on records. Thus began her recording career--in 1932--yodeling and playing fiddle behind Davis. A rather strange sequence of events brought her in contact with the Prairie Ramblers in Chicago at a time when their station manager felt they needed a female singer to liven up their act, and Patsy got the job. She made her first records with them in 1935--"I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" and "Ridin' Old Paint" are from that session--and continued to record with them for ARC/Columbia until 1940. "I Wanna Be a Cowboy's Dream Girl" and "Shy Little Anne from Cheyenne" are from the last of those sessions. In later years she recorded for RCA, Vogue, Decca and Sims. But records were never an important source of income for her compared to personal appearances and radio--especially after she left ARC. In the 1970s she was still performing, both in this country and abroad.

In his jacket notes, Hans Dax states that Patsy was "the first one to abolish the concept of the helpless female." Years ago, in a country music class discussing the role of women in country music at which Patsy was a guest, I tried to elicit from her some comments about her "heroic" role as a female performer at a time when they were rare, and prodded her for recollections of the hardships that the occasional female performer faced in the music business. But she did not recall it that way; she did not see herself as striking a blow for sexist equality, and remembered some awkward moments but mostly the enjoyable times she and her musical associates had.

In addition to her role as singer and occasional instrumentalist, she was also a successful composer and wrote some of her own best hits including "Cowboy's Sweetheart." The success of that was so great that Art Satherley urged her to pen a dozen more of the same spirit--hence the "Cowboy's Dream Girl."

Except for the wartime sentimentality of "Goodnight Soldier," most of the selections are to a sprightly tempo with hot western accompaniment--fiddle most predominant (by Tex Atchison before 1938--"Cowboy's Sweetheart" and "Old Paint" on this LP; by Allan Crockett afterwards), with occasional

breaks on the mandolin (Chick Hurt) and rhythm on guitar (Salty Holmes) and/or bass (Jack Taylor). On "My Poncho Pony" there is also accordion (probably by Augie Kline), and electric or steel guitar on "Smile and Drive Your Blues Away," originally the pairing with "Goodnight Soldier" on Decca. Based on the selections heard here, Crockett was by far the more impressive fiddler.

The transfers from 78s are reasonably clean here; the biographical information is sketchy, but Patsy's career has been documented elsewhere.

The jacket states that this album is "licensed by Patsy Montana for a limited edition of 500 copies," but says nothing about any agreement with the original recording company. This is an interesting approach to the problem of reissuing archival recordings that are of little monetary interest to the legal owner, but I doubt that Columbia and Decca would be sanguine to the arrangement if there were substantial profits being made.

--Norm Cohen



#### TRADITIONAL ANGLO-AMERICAN FOLKSONG

*ADDIE GRAHAM: BEEN A LONG TIME TRAVELING* (June Appal JA 020). Unaccompanied ballads, songs, and hymns, field recorded in east Kentucky by Rich Kirby. Selections: *Pretty Polly* (Laws P36b), *Three Little Babes* (Child 79), *The Lonesome Scenes of Winter* (Laws H12), *The Dummy Can't Run*, *O&K Train Song*, *Omie Wise* (Laws F4), *Ida Red/Went Up on the Old Hillside*, *The Indian Tribes of Tennessee*, *Wouldn't Mind Working from Sun to Sun*, *Long and a Country Jake*, *Darling Don't You Know That's Wrong*, *We're Stole and Sold from Africa*, *Been a Long Time Traveling*, *Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*, *Hungry and Faint and Poor*, *Sister Thou Art Mild and Lovely*, *Jesus Reigns*, *I am a Little Scholar*, *My Head and Stay is Called Away*, *When Moses and the Israelites*, *The Lord Will Provide*, *Dear Friends Farewell*. Eight-page brochure with song notes and biography by Barbara Edwards and Rich Kirby.

*LARENA LEBARR CLARK: CANADA AT TURN OF THE SOD: LUMBERING, RAILROADING AND SEA BALLADS* (Clark Records LCS 110). Unaccompanied ballads and songs, studio-recorded in Ontario. Selections: *The Banks of the Pembina* (Laws H11), *The Gypsy Davy* (Child 200), *Big Jackass Smelling of Partridge* (Laws Q19), *Sweet Kitty Clyde*, *The Roving Shantyboy*, *The Rich and the Poor*, *Pretty Red Wing*, *The Jealous Lover* (Laws F1), *Johnny Doyle* (Laws M2), *The Ship that Never Returned* (Laws D27), *Erin's Green Shore* (Laws Q27), *The Moose River Gold Mine*, *The Last Fierce Charge* (Laws A17), *The Winds that Blew Cross the Wild Moor* (Laws P21), *The Capture of Albert Johnson*, *Jim Blake*, *Jessie at the Railway Bar*. Back-jacket song notes by Edith Fowke.

*BUNK AND BECKY PETTYJOHN* (Arizona Friends of Folklore AFF 33-4). Ballads, songs, and instrumentals, some with guitar accompaniment by Irene Jones. Titles: *Bunk Pettyjohn--Uncloudy Day*, *Wildwood Flower*, *Texas Belle*, *Blind Girl*, *Little Sod Shanty*, *Rye Whiskey*, *Little Waltz in A*, *Soldier's Joy*, *Wreck of the Number 9* (Laws G26), *Battle of New Orleans*, *Green Corn*, *Old Joe Clark*, *When the Roll's Called Up Yonder*, *I Went Out a-Hunting*, *Put My Little Shoes Away*, *Little Joe the Wrangler* (Laws B5), *My Old Kentucky Home*, *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*; *Becky Pettyjohn--Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot*, *Put My Little Shoes Away*, *Lightning Express*. With twenty-eight-page brochure including text transcriptions and song notes by producer Keith Cunningham and Judith McCulloh.

In my last review of American folksingers in the domestic tradition (*JEMFQ*, Spring 1979), I noted the paucity of good albums of this kind of music. Beyond the fact that these three albums (mostly) fall under that heading, and are aimed at rather limited, specialized audiences, the differences among them far outweigh the similarities—both in terms of contents and also in terms of presentation.

Addie Graham was born before the turn of the century in Wolfe County, Kentucky, and grew up in the eastern part of the state. She learned her songs from her parents and neighbors, including Grant Reed, "...the only colored man there was around there...He'd go along the road pickin' the banjo and I'd stand and listen at him." A few years ago, Addie's grandson, Rich Kirby, recognizing the wealth of traditional song lore that his grandmother possessed, conceived this album to share the music he had loved during his childhood with a wider audience. Mrs. Graham sings in a husky voice, in a slightly decorated style that is neither ornate nor monotonous. This evaluation may sound like very faint praise, but in truth I would rate her an outstanding folksinger in the older style. Her repertoire, as represented on this disc, holds several surprises in the very rare items such as "*The Indian Tribes of Tennessee*," "*We're Stole and Sold from Africa*," "*Long and a Country Jake*," and "*O&K Train Song*." Side One consists of secular ballads and songs; Side Two is devoted entirely to hymns and religious songs. One one pair of tunes ("*Ida Red*"/"*Went Up on the Old Hillside*") she accompanies herself on piano; the other items are all unaccompanied. The brochure includes a biography and broad

evaluation of Mrs. Graham's music and its role in her life. Brief but intelligent notes on each song sketch--where known--its history, and where Addie learned it, and offer some pertinent published references. Like the other two albums under review here, there is no clue in the notes as to when the recordings were made (the record was published in 1978).

Mrs. LaRena Clark is quite a different sort of singer. First recorded by Canadian folklorist Edith Fowke over twenty years ago, Mrs. Clark has continually expanded her immense repertoire with traditional songs as well as others of her own composition, has appeared at numerous folksong festivals, and has issued ten LPs on her own label following her first LP on the Topic label. Her voice is strong and clear and she sings in the unornamented style typical of most northern American and Canadian singers. Her repertoire is varied, including older traditional ballads as well as Music Hall pieces, late nineteenth-century sentimental songs and ballads, and more recent country-western songs (two of the pieces in this album--"The Moose River Gold Mine" and "The Capture of Albert Johnson" were learned from recordings by the composer, Wilf Carter [Montana Slim]. Her tunes to some of the well-known songs, are quite unusual--in particular, "The Gypsy Davy," which resembles, in part, "Yankee Doodle," "Kitty Clyde," and "Jealous Lover." Most of the songs on this album are familiar but there are a couple rarities--in particular the labor song, "The Rich and the Poor." Brief back-jacket notes by Edith Fowke sketch the backgrounds of the various songs.

The third of the three albums in this grouping stretches the notion of domestic tradition a bit: the repertoire of Bunk Pettyjohn is largely borrowed from the early twentieth-century hillbilly repertoire, but the pieces are played (on banjo, guitar, or mandolin) in such an unpoltished and unself-conscious style as to suggest the hearth as a proper setting for the music rather than the public stage. The album contains a twenty-eight-page brochure which, unfortunately, tells us little about the performers. From a previous AFF release (AFF 33-3) that includes some tracks by Bunk Pettyjohn, we learn that he was born in 1902 and lived in Texas and Oklahoma before coming to Arizona. His wife, Becky, died shortly before this album was released (though no date is given). Most of Bunk's selections are instrumentals with only two or three vocals; Becky's three selections are unaccompanied vocals. The brochure is devoted largely to notes on the songs. These consist of alternating paragraphs by Judith McCulloh and Keith Cunningham, the former offering more scholarly comments on the backgrounds of the pieces, the latter, generally more personal observations of Bunk himself. McCulloh also provides a lengthy biblio-discography for each number.

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*HAND-ME-DOWN MUSIC--OLD SONGS, OLD FRIENDS:* 1. TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA (Folkways FES 34151). Field recordings made in 1976-79 by Karen G. Helms. Selections: Roy Pope & the Carolina Homeboys--Cacklin' Hen, *Fire on the Hillside*; Otis High and Flarrie Grimm--*Froggie Went A-Courtin'*; Otis High--Captain Karo, *Young Ladies Take Warning*; Bascom Traywick--*Jack and Jo, Grandma's Advice*; Willie Hamilton--*It Rained Five Days, Can't Hit Lucky, John Henry*; Roy Pope--*Leather Britches*; Seena Helms--*Lady Bride and Three Babes* (Child 79), *Christian Pilgrim, Pioneer Courtship* (Laws H13); Horace Helms--*Katy Kline*; Henry Griffin--*Holler Jimmy Riley Ho, Patsy Beasley*; Horace Helms and Karen Helms--*Soldier's Joy*. Includes sixteen-page brochure with notes about the musicians, selections, and collector; transcriptions of song texts; photos.

*BETWEEN THE SOUND & THE SEA: ORAL TRADITION MUSIC OF THE NORTH CAROLINA OUTER BANKS* (Folkways FS 3848). Field recordings collected by Karen G. Helms and recorded by Otto Henry in 1973-76. Selections: Dile Gallop--*Johnny O'Lou*; Isabel Etheridge--*Home Sweet Home/Kitty Wells, Amber Tresses* (with Mary Basnight), Nellie Cropsey (Laws Flc); Elizabeth Howard--*Ole Turkey Buzzard/Oh Pray Doctor*; Lawton Howard--*Little Cindy/Round the Mountain*; Dick Tillett--*Seventy-Two, Sailor Boy* (Laws K13); Edgar Howard, Jule Garrish, and Maurice Ballance--*Tom Dan'l's, Matilda Jane Lee, Paddy's Hollow*; Charles Stowe--*Charlie Mason Pogie Boat, Carolina Cannonball*; Jule Garrish--*Casey Jones/The Old Sow, Booze Yacht*; Edgar Howard--*Let's Keep the Holler Alive*. Includes five-page brochure with brief notes about the songs and performers and the collector; photos.

Few states have been as well canvassed for folksongs as has North Carolina. Four volumes of the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore document the music of the early decades of this century. In the 1920s and 1930s the state's musicians made a major contribution to commercially-recorded hillbilly music, thereby unwittingly documenting the continuing and evolving folk tradition of the period. In the 1960s, field recordings given impetus by the thriving folksong revival demonstrated that great ballad singers such as Dillard Chandler, Lee Monroe Presnell, or Horton Barker, and great instrumental ensembles, such as the Watson Family and friends, could still be recorded. It is easy, then, to lose interest in performers who cannot match the excellence of those now-familiar names. The artists featured on these two albums are not great folk musicians; nevertheless both albums have enough interesting or unusual material to deserve notice.

*Hand-Me-Down Music* was recorded around the Unionville-Fairview and Marshville-Olive Branch areas of Union County in North Carolina's piedmont, not far from Charlotte. With one or two exceptions,

the performers are all in their sixties and seventies; and except for Willie Hamilton, all are white. There is some nice unaccompanied singing by John A. Bivens, Seena Helms, and Otis High; but the most unusual item is a fragment of a rare murder ballad, "Patsy Beasley," purportedly about an episode from the 1840s, a piece that has not, to my knowledge, been recorded from another singer. Almost as rare is "Grandma's Advice," originally titled "My Grandma's Advice" and credited to Kansky, composed before 1870. It has been collected in the Maritime Provinces several times by Helen Creighton. "Captain Karo" is a variant of "Kimo Kimo," the minstrel stage derivative of "Froggie Went a-Courtin.'" The first stanza of the hymn "Christian Pilgrim" is titled just "Pilgrim" in the Original Sacred Harp; however, the other stanzas seem to come from a separate source. "Jack and Joe" is a Tin Pan Alley pop song from the early 1900s for which at least two sheet music versions have been found.

*Music of the North Carolina Outer Banks*, from the eastern extremity of the state, is of particular interest partly because of the several local, fairly recent compositions that demonstrate that the creative folk process is by no means dead in those parts. "Charlie Mason Pogie Boat," to the tune of "The Death of Floyd Collins," concerns an incident of 1948. "Carolina Cannonball" is a localized version of "Wabash Cannonball." "Paddy's Hollow" and "Let's Keep the Holler Alive" are from the 1940s and 1970s, respectively. All four of these are sung by their composers. "Tom Dan'l's" and "Matilda Jane Lee" are both local ballads from the latter part of the nineteenth century; the latter is set to a tune found in North Carolina for the old ballad, "The Jew's Garden." "Seventy-Two" was collected by Vance Randolph in the Ozarks and appeared in print in the early 1890s. "Amber Tresses Tied in Blue" was written in 1874 by H. P. Danks and Samuel M. Mitchell and was also collected by Randolph. Although most of these are quite enjoyable performances, the most striking one on the album is Dile Gallop's rendition of "Johnny O'Lou," a local composition of some fifty years ago, but probably with Anglo-Irish antecedents. This interesting album could have been much better annotated.

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*I KIND OF BELIEVE IT'S A GIFT: FIELD RECORDINGS OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC FROM SOUTHCENTRAL KENTUCKY* (Meriweather 1001-2). Forty-two selections recorded between 1959 and 1977 by D. K. Wilgus and Lynwood Montell, Bruce Greene, and Burt Feintuch, featuring twelve different artists or groups; two LP discs. Selections: Street Butler--Young John Riley, Higgins' Farewell, Jenny Jenkins; Taylor Chapel A.M.E. Church--Do Lord Remember Me, This Little Light of Mine; Jim Bowles--Railroad Through the Rocky Mountains, Walk and Talk Together, Shout Old Lulu, Miss Dare, Ida Red (with Zelma Bowles); John Graves--Darling, Getting on the Train, Shucking Up the Corn; Clorine Lawson--Row Us Over the Tide, Courting Song, Old Dan Tucker, Drunkard's Lone Child, Charles Guiteau; Isham Monday--Susan Loller on Judio, Rock Creek Girl, Green Mountain, Christmas Eve; Pat Kingery and Troy Basil--Yellow Rose of Texas, Rocky Road Through Georgia, Nancy Dalton; Gladys Pace--Pearl Bryan, Stern Old Bachelor, Lass of Mohea; J. E. Chelf--Going Across the Sea, Hot Times, Sweet Sunny South; Gusty Wallace--Give the Fiddler a Dram, Jennie Put the Kettle On, Chicken Reel; Bud Garrett--Do Remember Me Baby, Way Out in Free Hill, I Done Quite Drinking; The Walker Family--Sundown, Old Liberty, Hangman, Shortning Bread, Sinful to Flirt. Ten-page brochure with notes to the recordings and artists by Feintuch and Greene. (Available from Bowling Green-Warren County Arts Commission, 502 E. Main St., Bowling Green, KY 42101.)

*FOLK MUSIC OF OHIO: 1938 THROUGH 1940* (Ohio Folklife OF 1001). Nineteen field recordings made by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax under the auspices of the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song, featuring nine different performers or groups. Selections: Pete Steele--Hoe Down, John Henry, Little Birdie, Coal Creek March, Spanish Fandango; Mrs. Pete Steele and Pete Steele--The House Carpenter; Pearl Steele, Mrs. Steele, Pete Steele, Craig Steele--Galilee; Henry Davis--Snappin' Bug, No Work For a Tramp, Hogs in a Corn Field; Vergil and Geneva Bowman--I'm Just Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail; Captain Pearl Nye--We're Going to Pump Out Lake Erie, One Night in Cleveland; String Band from Ft. Thomas, KY--Red Hill Special; Edgar Smith--Hot Corn, Cold Corn, Lynchburg Town; Turner Powers--Liza Jane; Bellbrook String Band--Shortenin' Bread; The Ridge Rangers--New River Train. Fourteen-page brochure and back-jacket liner notes on songs and performers by David A. Brose and the Ohio Folklife Group.

Kentucky has proved fertile ground for folksong collecting for some sixty years--Wyman, McGill, Sharp, Perrow, and Combs in the 1910s and '20s; Lomax, Thomas, and Halpert in the 1930s and '40s; Wilgus and Montell in the 1950s; Wilgus, Montell, and Jones in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. The Western Kentucky Folklore Archive, whence all the recordings on this double album were drawn, had over 5,500 items when I looked through it in some detail over ten years ago. By contrast, Ohio has not been nearly so well canvassed. The only sizeable collection that is accessible is represented by Mary O. Eddy's volume, *Ballads and Songs from Ohio*. The relative extent of collecting activity in the two states is indicated by the Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song checklist of songs recorded up to July 1940; it lists approximately 150 items from Ohio and more than seven times as many items from Kentucky. Although *Folk Music of Ohio* would appear to help redress the comparative neglect given the region north of the Ohio River, the boundary between Ohio and Kentucky, closer inspection proves this collection to be as much a Kentucky as an Ohio collection: Pete Steele and his wife were originally from Kentucky; Edgar Smith was banjoist for the Fort Thomas, Kentucky, String Band;

and the Bowman sisters were granddaughters of the brother of the famous Kentucky balladeer and fiddler, Blind Jim Day (Jilson Setters). Their appearance on this album is a result of the fact that the Lomaxes did much of their Ohio fieldwork at the Ohio Valley Folk Festivals, which attracted performers from both sides of the Ohio River. And, in truth, the music of Southern Ohio is closer to that of Kentucky than it is to that of the northern part of the state. The only representative of Northern Ohio traditions on this album is Captain Pearl Nye, who sings two songs associated with the life along the Erie Canal.

The two albums were both produced by groups of young folklorists and their students; in the case of the Ohio album, the material is from acetate recordings of 1938-40, while the Kentucky material is from tape recordings of 1959-77, and consequently of noticeably higher technical quality. The range of materials is similar: both include unaccompanied ballad singing (Ohio: Nye, Davis, Mrs. Steele's singing to her husband's banjo accompaniment is not far removed stylistically; Kentucky: Butler, Lawson, Pace), banjo and fiddle instrumentals, and some hillbilly influences. The latter is represented on the Ohio album by three string bands: the Ft. Thomas band, the Ridge Rangers, and the Bellbrook Band; and by the lovely duet version of Carl Davis's "I'm Just Here to Get My Baby Out of Jail" sung by the 13-year-old Bowman sisters. On the Kentucky album it is represented by the Walker Family--a band with two very good vocalists (the old-time ballad singing on "Hangman" (Child 95), set to hillbilly instrumentation, provides an unusual performance indeed). The Ohio album offers one religious number--the final selection, "Galilee," sung by Pete Steele and family. The Kentucky album includes two selections from the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Bowling Green. Afro-American traditions are also represented on the latter album by Bud Garrett's own blues-like compositions, sung to his own electric guitar accompaniment.

The Kentucky set comes in a double jacket that opens up to display photos of most of the performers. The brochure includes notes on the songs and tunes and performers, as well as transcriptions of the song texts. The annotations of the Ohio album are puzzlingly arranged. The back jacket has data on where and when the items were performed (it would have been useful to add the original AFS recording numbers), biographical comments on the performers, and some poorly edited discographic matter (the same discography of five albums--representing, apparently, recordings by Pete Steele, and recordings by others of his tunes--appears three times). The brochure includes more notes on the backgrounds of the songs and tunes and text transcriptions, as well as a few references (some incompletely cited) to other published versions of the items included.

Musically, perhaps the Ohio album is a bit the stronger of the two; I would have liked to see more material in the Northern tradition, since relatively little of that is available on LP compared to Southern traditional music. Some listeners may also question the necessity for including two cuts ("New River Train" and "Coal Creek March") that are available on Library of Congress LPs.

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*TRADITIONAL MUSIC FROM CENTRAL OHIO* (Traditional Arts Program TALP 001). Fourteen field recordings made in 1978-79 by David A. Brose and Timothy C. Lloyd. Selections: Clyde C. Riggs--*The Arkansas Traveler*; Ward Jarvis--*Pretty Little Indian, Icy Mountain*; Ruth Hiles--*Little Bessie*; Harvey Phelps--*Schottische*; Rollie Hommon and Harold Henthorne--*The News Boy, Cherokee*; Woody Inboden--*Grey Eagle, Where No One Stands Alone*; Shorty Ratliff and the Bluegrass Mountain Boys--*Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone, Panhandle Country*; F. LeRoy Hawkins--*After My Laughter Came Tears*; The Ambassadors--*I'm Standing on the Solid Rock*; The Ebenezer Baptist Church Mass Choir--*Jesus is Real*. Sixteen-page brochure and back-jacket liner notes on songs and performers by David A. Brose. (Available from Traditional Arts Program, Ohio Foundation on the Arts, 630 So. 3rd St., Columbus, OH, 43206.)

This album is quite different in content from the preceding album of Ohio folk music. Collected some forty years later, it is not surprising that there are stylistic differences between the two sets. The chronological gap is augmented somewhat by different goals of the respective collectors: the Lomaxes were consciously seeking out the older traditional music, whereas Brose and Lloyd made an effort to document the music that is still vital in today's folk music in Central and Southern Ohio. Side One of this album is devoted to older traditions--banjo and fiddle music, sentimental ballads, and the ubiquitous "Arkansas Traveler," skit--this one done with jewsharp accompaniment. Side Two features a popular local professional bluegrass band, a Baptist quartet, a Baptist church choir, and a retired professional pianist/singer, among others. The back jacket, as in the case of the previous Ohio album, contains data on where and when the performance was collected and on the background of the song itself, including in some cases bibliographies and discographies of other versions. The booklet includes photos and biographies of the performers and text transcriptions.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*BIG ROAD BLUES: TRADITION AND CREATIVITY IN THE FOLK BLUES*, by David Evans (Los Angeles, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 379pp; \$29.95.

This work is a detailed analysis of folk blues, their composition and origins, and how the singers and songs relate within a local tradition.

Since the mid-1960s Evans has made a particular study of Mississippi blues and has contributed throughout to the growing literature of indigenous black American folk music. This text is in many ways a synthesis of much of his work, concentrating on the essential qualities of a local tradition--Drew, Mississippi, in the heart of the Delta country, home of legendary blues singers like Charley Patton and Tommy Johnson. He further analyzes the spread of some of these traditions by other well-known bluesmen like Son House, Robert Johnson, and Howling Wolf.

His study of Drew is fascinating in its detailed coverage and is compulsory reading for all with but the slightest interest in Delta blues, whereas the folkloric text of earlier and later chapters might not suit the casual blues browser. Rather than attempt to determine an *urform* among Drew blues, Evans states that "learners, once they became established musicians, probably affected their teachers' music as much as they themselves had been affected by it." Although no truly comparable study exists, from my knowledge of Blind Boy Fuller around Durham, North Carolina, Evans might well be establishing a general pattern.

The opening chapter is an historical appreciation of written blues history but more detailed and more valuable than you will find elsewhere. Historical perspective is never easy to achieve, especially as for some thirty years after the 1920s with its--admittedly limited--scholarship there were few beyond the remarkable Lomax family in the remotest way interested in blues. It is easy to suggest that, collecting in Alabama in the 1950s, Harold Courlander "encountered very little blues activity there," but perhaps he simply did not search for it. When non-folklorists like Bengt Olsson in the mid-1970s and George Mitchell within the last two years have looked in Alabama, they found blues singers--and good ones. Harry Oster is somewhat taken to task for having values "closer to those of a literary critic" but I'd like to see Oster's remarkable contribution to the recorded folk music of Louisiana acknowledged; though in fairness, Evans's book is not the place.

Evans states that prospects for "future cooperation between folklorists and blues enthusiasts look very good," but, laudatory though this would be, I would suggest it is probably too late; at least as regards the true folk performer as opposed to the folksy. As this study dramatically exposes, the really valuable research needs to be based to a substantial degree on the personal involvement of collecting in the field. Evans has an unparalleled record for such work in his chosen areas of study but it would be unwise to presume that many others are so equipped. Only a handful of people--none of them full-time folklorists--can offer comparable studies and the suggestion could be made that few others will come forth.

Differentiating between folk and popular blues and appreciating that post-1950 blues producers for record companies in the South were really little different from their 1920s counterparts, even though the material with which they worked had largely altered, Evans enters into the meat of his text, broadening earlier articles on the techniques of blues composition among black folksingers and structure and meaning in folk blues. The section on his personal experience in collecting in the field ought to be read in conjunction with an earlier *JEMF Quarterly* article (No. 50, Summer 1978). Armchair theorists postulate hypotheses but Evans is not among them. His observations and analyses are drawn from practical experience and perseverance, but the very breadth and magnitude of his study of the Drew tradition once more raises the question of whether a further study of comparable depth can be achieved.

One is impressed throughout not just by the amount of material he has amassed but by the degree to which he has scrutinized it. His experience has prevented him from accepting at face value all that songs--see "Maggie Campbell Blues" cited on page 155--or his informants have stated. In one of her novels Zora Neale Hurston has a character state that a white person is given "something that satisfied...because knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing.... 'I'll put this play

toy in his hand,' the man says, 'and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll...sing my song.'" Maybe Evans did walk off with the odd toy, but for an example of his thoroughness read the preface to song example 30. Evans returns to his study of one song, "Big Road Blues," analyzing its blues core and the additions made by a broad range of later folk singers. He concludes by stressing the need for more single blues song studies, but we are dangerously late to be looking.

The final chapter relates folks blues to the study of folklore and a glance at the footnotes shows it is not for the casual reader. He restates the place for comparative study in the field of contemporary folklore research and posits folk blues within the framework of academic folklore scholarship. If it were to do that alone the book would be of real worth but there is much more besides for the discerning blues enthusiast, let alone the folklorist, who is willing to investigate further. With its excellent bibliography and fine, detailed end-notes to chapters, this study must now be the basic introduction to folk blues. There are annotated texts of selected songs; fortunately not to proliferation, for they are no substitute for hearing the songs. Many of these, including some from his own field recordings, have been made available on small specialist labels. Search them out and appreciate what a revelation the Drew tradition was.

--Bruce Bastin  
West Sussex, England

*SOUTHERN MUSIC AMERICAN MUSIC*, by Bill C. Malone (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 203pp, index, illustrations, bibliography; \$16.50.

Sometimes one gets the feeling that Bill Malone is the J. D. Salinger of country music scholarship: he is a producer of sound, influential, well-written books, but they are spaced years apart. *Southern Music American Music* is his first full-length study since his monumental *Country Music U.S.A.*, the first and still the definitive history of the genre which came out in 1968. A veritable revolution in scholarship in country, blues, and folk music has occurred since that pioneering effort, and in *Southern Music American Music*, Professor Malone shows that he has not only kept up with the pack, but is fully capable of fitting the data into new and challenging theoretical frameworks.

To evaluate this new work requires first some knowledge of its context. It is no revelation that university presses today are feeling the pressures of inflation and recession more keenly than even their commercial counterparts, and that many of them are looking for books that will appear to a broader audience. It is an open secret that a recent book on Elvis Presley by his nurse helped keep afloat Memphis State University Press. Other presses are designing special series to reach this general audience; Tennessee has its Three Star series of books by scholars designed for a general audience, and the University Press of Kentucky has its Bicentennial Bookshelf and its intriguing series "New Perspectives on the South." Edited by Charles P. Roland, this series of short books (which includes some nineteen titles) seeks to "undertake a new evaluation of many aspects of the South's experience, viewing its distant and recent past, its internal development and its relations with the world, in the sharp light of the contemporary scene." Bill Malone's part in this mission has been to survey the South's music--or at least that part of it generated from folk sources--and to evaluate it in modern terms.

Thus one part of the book's purpose is simply to offer a fresh, accurate, and informed survey of blues, jazz, country, gospel, and related musics, along with their origins and their commercial development patterns. This Malone does, and does very well. He has always been a sensitive, highly readable writer, and the well-tuned graceful prose of *Southern Music American Music* is a welcome antidote to the burdensome jargon now cluttering up pages of music and folklore journals. Malone has also been one of the best-informed writers working, not only in terms of his own interviews and research, but in knowing his bibliography. The 25-page section of annotated "Bibliographic Notes" is itself worth the price of the book, merely as a convenient reference.

Some of Malone's chapters are divided into genres (Chapter 3 is subtitled "Ragtime, Blues, Jazz," and Chapter 4 discusses "Hillbilly, Cajun, Gospel"), but others break down this genre approach and deal with a variety of musical styles under headings like "The Great Depression" and "Nationalization." These later chapters offer some intriguing hints as to future directions in music history; both the genre approach (which has ghettoized different types of music like blues, jazz, and country, and which has developed a cadre of specialists for each genre, specialists who seldom know much about music outside their genre) and the song history approach (which ignores all-important developments of musical style) have proven inadequate ways to deal accurately with the complex pop music that emerged from Southern folk tradition. In bringing these genres under one study, Malone has shown that a broader and more synthetic approach is feasible.

To many readers, though, who are familiar with the general histories of the types of Southern music, the most intriguing part of *Southern Music American Music* is Malone's interest in explaining the uniqueness of Southern music. He stops short of claiming, as some reviewers have suggested, that

all pop music in America has Southern roots. He does say that "music has been one of the great natural resources of the South and one of its most valuable exports," and that the South has impacted on general pop music in two ways: as a source of "images or symbols, both positive and negative," which have influenced songwriters, and as a source of "entertainers and styles that have done much to shape the entire realm" of pop music. The distinctiveness of Southern music he attributes to it being a result of "a long and vital interrelationship between our two greatest folk music traditions, the African and the British," and to it being "developed in a society long known for its limitations: a social context of poverty, slavery, suffering, deprivation, religious fundamentalism, and cultural isolation."

To fully develop these ideas while sketching the more general history of the different musics would take far more space than the format of "New Perspectives on the South" allows, and Malone can only hint at the kind of research he himself is pursuing along these lines. Meanwhile, we have in *Southern Music American Music* one of the best and most accurate general music surveys in print--and about the only reliable general overview available of Cajun, gospel, and honky-tonk music.

--Charles K. Wolfe  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

"AND OTHER NEIGHBORLY NAMES": SOCIAL PROCESS AND CULTURAL IMAGES IN TEXAS FOLKLORE, eds., Richard Bauman and Roger D. Abrahams (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), 321pp.

Editors Bauman and Abrahams have affectionately dedicated this collection of essays on Texas folklore to Americo Paredes. Like Mody Boatwright, the Lomaxes, and J. Frank Dobie, among others, Americo Paredes has spent a lifetime on the scholarly study of folklore as experience within the Texas perimeter. Many of the folklorists represented in this volume acknowledge his influence on their work; judging from the many references to his writings, it has not been minor. To refer to Dr. Paredes as *Don Americo*, as the editors do, is to confer upon him a respectful title he rightly deserves.

In their lengthy introduction, the editors describe some of the qualities unique to Texan folklorists--qualities which are perceived as responsible for showing "academic folklorists how to get out of the library and out among the singers and storytellers, the cotton choppers and cowboys." The "texture and dimensionality" that is found in the writing of these Texans, whether native-born or born-again, is a result of their "knowing where they came from, if also from knowing where they want to go."

And where they want to go, the editors say is referred to as "performance-oriented folkloristics." Texas style. The essays are carefully selected to reflect this perspective.

In the first of three sections, "The Structure and Context of Expressive Forms," are found essays by Joe Grahm, "The *caso*: An Emic Genre of Folk Narrative" and by John Holman McDowell, "The *Corrido* of Greater Mexico as Discourse, Music and Event." Graham makes a very good case for the legitimacy of *caso* as an emic classification of the personal experiences of West Texas Mexicans. McDowell carefully analyzes three distinct aspects, or functions, of the *corrido*--as discourse, as music, and as event. In doing so, he brings considerable insight to the steadily growing study of the Texan-Mexican genre.

In Section II, "Social Types and Stereotypes," editor Bauman includes his own essay, "'Any Man Who Keeps More'n One Hound'll Lie to You': Dog Trading and Storytelling at Canton, Texas." Traditionally, men in the area of Canton gather once a month to buy, sell, or trade hunting dogs, and exchange news and local gossip. It is in this ambiance that Bauman discovers and discusses the extent to which the participants use verbal skills to effect a trade--skills that extend the limits of expressive behavior. The humorous accounts of these traders reveal much about their mode of communication: they acknowledge, accept, and effectively use a narrating system that allows for the many variations on lying. To know the variations is to manipulate that system. This essay alone is worth the price of the book.

Alicia Maria Gonzales presents a delicious account of the itinerate baker in the Southwest in "Guess How Donuts are Made: Verbal and Non-Verbal Aspects of the *Panadero* and His Stereotype." Other "social types and stereotypes" are "Cowboys and Clowns: Rodeo Specialist and the Ideology of Work and Play" by Beverly J. Stoeltje, and "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys: Words in Collision" by Archie Green. The one is a close look at what Stoeltje considers "one of the most neglected areas of folklore scholarship"--referring to large public events, such as festivals and fairs; the other is an etymological study of the term *cosmic cowboy* which peaked in popularity in the seventies. Like a Texas "norther," this appellation gathered momentum, permeated the atmosphere, and, then, quickly disappeared. Green traces the history of the word *cowboy* and of country rock music, and explains their convergence in the unlikely place of Austin, Texas. Green is more than a mere lexicographer, however. With minute attention to historical detail, he has managed to evoke an entire decade. Some readers might get downright nostalgic.

Section III, "Expressive Dimensions of Heterogeneity and Change," includes essays by Jose Limon, Roseann Jordan, Manuel Peña, Thomas A. Green, and Patrick B. Mullen. An especially valuable piece is Limon's "The Folk Performance of 'Chicano' and the Cultural Limits of Political Ideology." Writing from the vantage point of an insider, Limon brings into clear focus the socio-political use of the term *Chicano* in, as well as outside, the Texan-Mexican community.

Manuel Peña offers an excellent account of the historical evolution of *conjunto*. This term can refer either to the musical group, or to the type of Texas-Mexican music that they produce--a type so stylistically distinct that it is immediately recognized as *conjunto* music. Dr. Peña's insistence on the term *proletariat* to describe the working masses (his words) is, I think, unfortunate. To categorize and label people, as he does, is to depersonalize them and deprive them of their individual worth. To state that *conjunto* music was/is, by and for the working class belies those "others" who also dance *el taguachito* on Saturday nights.

In the concluding essay, co-editor Abrahams explores the dynamics of festivals--"Displays events," as he calls them--and the interaction of the participants, stressing in the process the difference between household traditions and those of larger, public displays.

Unfortunately, books written about the performing arts generally share a common disadvantage: the lack of a multi-sensory accompaniment to the printed word. It would be nice to hear Ed Bell actually relate the tale about the fish who fell into a creek and drowned, hum along with one of the *conjuntos*, smell the *pan dulce* baking, or see the announcer at the rodeo interact with the audience.

In spite of such an obvious disadvantage, this remains an excellent collection of essays reflecting the diverse *Tejano* experience. This diversity becomes a well-balanced whole when placed within the conceptual framework of "performance-oriented folkloristics." Richard Bauman and Roger Abrahams have made an important contribution to regional folklore.

--Mary Helen de la Peña Brown  
Los Angeles, California

*GOSPEL MUSIC ENCYCLOPEDIA*, by Robert Anderson and Gail North (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), 320 pp., preface, introduction, appendices, music, discography, photos, index; \$14.95.

The past decade's dramatic expansion of Christian music, and media--with its attendant rapidly multiplying record companies, gospel concerts and festivals, and cable and satellite television stations--is not an isolated phenomenon. Religious revival and its celebration in song have their roots in the earliest American Christian experience and, from that earliest time, have acted as a significant recurring presence in American history. The enormous popularity of today's gospel music can be best understood if seen in the perspective of those revivals which preceded it and which, through their influence, shaped the course, form, and content of today's gospel music. The extent to which such a historical perspective is present or absent in a gospel encyclopedia can determine the degree to which its readers will have access to the vital musical heritage which has produced today's music; and, if there is a major shortcoming in Robert Anderson and Gail North's volume, it is the absence of such a perspective.

Anderson and North's *Gospel Music Encyclopedia* focuses upon one aspect of the rich sacred music heritage--the contemporary performers of recorded gospel music. Described as "the first pictorial encyclopedia of great gospel music performers," the volume is comprised of introductory material; the "pictorial encyclopedia," which includes approximately 170 predominantly photo-illustrated entries on gospel groups and soloists drawing heavily upon the performers' own testimonies, recording histories, and Christian experiences; a chronological listing of the performers who have won the sacred music Dove Award; a membership roster for the Gospel Music Hall of Fame; nationwide lists of radio and television stations that play gospel music; a large number of "In Concert" photographs of gospel performers; the words and music of fifteen popular sacred songs; a discography for all the performers included in the encyclopedia; a list of officers for the Gospel Music Association; and an index to recording companies and individuals mentioned but not given an alphabetical listing in the book. Through this format, Anderson and North have accumulated a valuable compendium of information on contemporary gospel music recording artists. And, while not foremost a scholarly volume, it is a carefully constructed one which contains a wealth of facts for the Christian record-buyer or for those interested in a substantial overview of these performers.

Information which would have been welcome but was not included in this book are: clear definitions of the musical types referred to ("Jesus music," "soul gospel," "contemporary gospel," "new wave," and "Gray gospel"); consistent inclusion of birth dates for performers. Also regretfully missing, beyond the listings for the twenty-six members of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, is a more comprehensive sense of the non-recording performers and composers whose music preceded the current

recording artists and whose songs and influence over the years have provided the basis and much of the repertoire for those performers included in the encyclopedia.

While, by declaration and intent, this volume is not an historical encyclopedia, it can be consulted to produce some valuable current gospel music history. For, by drawing upon the testimony and bibliographic information included in the entries, a preliminary "family tree" of contemporary gospel music performers, with whom they have performed and when, can be constructed.

Possibly reflecting the audience to which the book is directed as much as the availability of materials, the performers included in this volume are, in majority, white. An accompanying anomaly, which reflects the contemporary emphasis of the work, is the extensive inclusion of Elvis Presley and his recordings and the slight mention of such earlier sacred and secular music artists as the Carter Family or the Jenkins Family. Martha Carson, however, does have an entry.

With *Gospel Music Encyclopedia* the reader gets a very strong sense of the gospel music industry as the big business that it has become. However, along with this the reader also gets a sense of the religious commitment that permeates the lives of those who perform its music. Although possibly not the ultimate gospel music encyclopedia, Anderson and North's volume has made a significant contribution to the study and enjoyment of contemporary American recorded gospel music and its performers.

--Frances Farrell

*University of California, Los Angeles*

WOODY GUTHRIE: *A LIFE*, by Joe Klein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), xvi + 476pp, photos; \$15.95.

WOODY GUTHRIE AND ME, by Ed Robbin (Berkeley: Lancaster-Miller Pub., 1979), xiii + 160pp, photos; \$6.95, softcover.

Woody Guthrie has been a popular figure for years, but with the release in 1976 (*United Artists*) of *Bound for Glory*, a movie based on a few years of his life, his popularity has taken more of an up-swing. Young people who had never heard of Woody Guthrie have now discovered and accepted him--the man and the legend. And the man/the legend are hard to separate. Even when reading about the darker side of Guthrie's personality, his actions somehow are excused (not always by the authors alone, but by readers too). He was a conscientious rebel as well as an ordinary troublemaker; he fought against those who suppress the working man, but treated his own family with as little respect as the "bosses" he hated treated their employees. In fact, we learn from these two biographies that Woody Guthrie was a bundle of contradictions--but he always seems to come out ahead.

*Woody Guthrie: A Life* and *Woody Guthrie and Me* cannot really be compared to each other--they are two distinct types of works. The former, by Joe Klein, is the result of in-depth research and he attempts to be unbiased; he presents the many facets of Guthrie's complex personality, and attempts to present them with equal fairness. Robbin's work, however, is a reminiscence. Robbin is a journalist and one-time editor of *People's World* and this book is a personal statement about his friendship with Guthrie and how they both were fighting for the liberation of the working classes, and does not pretend to be otherwise. Taken together, both works provide a well-rounded portrait of Woody Guthrie.

*Woody Guthrie and Me* includes a foreword by Pete Seeger and is composed of chapters in which Robbin recalls incidents in Guthrie's life as he knew of them. The topics covered in the chapters include Robbin's first meeting with Guthrie; Robbin's and Guthrie's interactions with American novelist Theodore Dreiser and socialist Buck Ackerman; the time period during which Woody and Mary Guthrie and their children were neighbors with the Robbin family; Robbin's involvement with the movie *Bound for Glory*; an interview in 1976 with Mary Guthrie; Woody Guthrie's relationship with actor Will Geer, as well as an interview with him in 1976; an interview with Marjorie Guthrie; Huntington's chorea; Guthrie's death; closing with a letter Woody Guthrie wrote to Robbin and his family in 1941.

As previously mentioned Robbin has been a journalist for many years, and this book is written in a journalistic style, and sometimes, to me, seems too affected. For instance, after the transcript of his interview with Will Geer, Robbin writes:

Will was wrapped in his Mexican blanket. His head dropped and I think he was beginning to doze off. Time to leave. I sat opposite him, just staring and remembering all the years our paths had crossed. Did I, perhaps, have a premonition that this was the last time we were to meet?

Or, in writing about labor lawyer George Shibley, who was later to represent Sirhan Sirhan:

I do not see Shibley now. Our paths are far apart. Will they cross someday in the future?

Also, except for Robbin's conversation with Will Geer, the other interviews (with Mary and Marjorie Guthrie) were not taped, nor did Robbin take notes: they are recalled strictly from memory; but, a point in Robbin's favor is that he never pretends to be presenting otherwise. And if readers of *Woody Guthrie and Me* take it in the spirit in which it was written--a warm portrait of a much-loved friend--then the book is another valuable source for those desiring to learn more about Woody Guthrie.

In contrast to Robbin's intimate portrait of a friend, Joe Klein's *Woody Guthrie: A Life* is a well researched and documented biography. Marjorie Guthrie approved of Klein as Guthrie's biographer and gave him access to all of his unpublished writings, letters, and diaries. In addition, Klein interviewed many of Guthrie's relatives and friends.

*A Life* is the first full-scale biography of Woody Guthrie and has been long awaited by Guthrie fans. Two other biographical works include Guthrie's own autobiography entitled *Bound for Glory*, which was published in 1943; and Henrietta Yurchenco's *A Mighty Hard Road: The Woody Guthrie Story*, published in 1970. (The latter book basically seems to be *BFG* retold.) Klein's work fills in many gaps of *BFG* as well as covering the years from 1943 to Guthrie's death in 1967. One of the more notable gaps in *BFG* was Guthrie's omission of his wife, Mary (Jennings). Klein discusses Woody's relationship with Mary in detail, and in so doing, reveals many facets to Guthrie's character: on the one hand, he was a man so concerned for human rights that he was willing to sacrifice his time and energy towards that ideal; while, on the other hand, he seemed not to realize that his own wife and children had rights, too--he would leave without telling them where he was going, or for how long, or if they could expect any money from him. This seems to point to a selfish side of Guthrie, who perhaps fulfilled his own needs to travel, sing, and maintain few personal responsibilities and ties, under the guise of reaching out to meet the people, to learn from them, to give them songs, shows, and lectures.

Woody Guthrie's use of music and songs to record the plight of the common man, as well as to entertain and educate him, is well documented by Klein. We learn that Guthrie did not begin with the intention of becoming a balladeer of his time and people. When he first learned to play guitar, from his Uncle Jeff, at age 17, "he'd sit and practice in Shorty's [store], trying to figure out how to play the songs his mother used to sing" (p. 48). He then joined Matt Jennings and Cluster Baker to form the Corncob Trio, playing folk songs at events in Pampa. Guthrie at this time began writing new lyrics to the old tunes learned from his mother. In 1935 he compiled a collection of fourteen of his own songs, entitled "Alonzo Zilch's Own Collection of Original Songs and Ballads," "all of which," states Klein, "seemed to be about unfaithful women."

Spurred by his trip to California in 1936 and his subsequent discovery of the International Workers of the World and their *Red Songbook*, Guthrie decided to write about his experiences, and those of others he had observed in California: the LAPD blockade at the California border ("Do Re Mi"), the anger toward "his people," the Okies, and the bitter experiences of them after reaching their "promised land" ("Talking Dust Bowl Blues"). And "he put his words to the old country tunes the Okie's loved, instead of the popular melodies the Wobblies had used. His new songs were more serious and direct than the 'Alonzo Zilch' experiments but, at the same time, they were simpler and funnier. Woody was beginning to discover his remarkable ability to transform his anger into humor" (p. 84).

In addition, the creative aspect of Guthrie's songwriting was possibly influenced by Huntington's chorea. During his discussions with Marjorie Guthrie about Huntington's, Klein found that the disease may have "worked like a drug on Woody, as a creative spur...enhancing his natural rhyminess, forcing the brain to continually rewire itself as cells died...forcing the brain to become--in effect--more creative to survive..." (p. 44).

In *A Life*, Klein also documents Woody's relationships with others; particularly Mary, Marjorie, and his father, Charley; however, he does gloss over Guthrie's relationship with his mother, Nora. In *Bound for Glory* we learn of Woody's attachment to his mother, and we see the good, loving side to her, whereas Klein brings us the crazy side of Nora--her instability brought on by Huntington's chorea. The reader receives the impression that Nora was not an important figure in Guthrie's life, and that they shared little, if any, love. Klein does, however, fill us in on Guthrie's marriage to folksinger Anneke. Although Yurchenco wrote of Woody's relationship with Anneke, it was in a skeletal manner; whereas Klein offers the details--what brought them together, and what they meant to each other at that time in their lives.

In comparing *A Life* with *Bound for Glory* and *A Mighty Hard Road* other inconsistencies are revealed. For example, in relating the details of Woody's sister Clara's death at fourteen, Guthrie writes:

Clara had caught fire. She had been ironing that day on an old kerosene stove, and it had blown up. She'd filled it with coal oil and cleaned it--it was on her apron. Then it got to smoking, wouldn't burn, so she opened the back to look in, and when the air hit the chamber full of thick oily smoke, it caught fire, blew up all over her (p.133).

(Yurchenco presents a paraphrased version of Guthrie's explanation.)

Klein writes:

Nora kept Clara home from school to help with the housework. Clara protested: she had to go to school, there was a final exam that day; if she didn't take it, she wouldn't graduate. Nora said she didn't care. They argued back and forth--the neighbors later said they knew something horrible was happening inside the house that morning--and finally Clara, half crazy with anger, doused her dress with coal oil and touched a match to it. She later explained she'd only intended to scare Nora...but the dress exploded in flames (pp. 21-22).

Klein's information seems to have come from interviews with Guthrie's living relatives as well as from an Okemah *Ledger* story, which quoted Clara as saying: "I put coal oil on my clothes and was going to burn them a little to scare my mother." I think that since the two versions are so different, Klein should have acknowledged Guthrie's version at that point. (Klein, later--p. 154--quotes some of Guthrie's Library of Congress interview, where he gives the same version of Clara's death that he does in *BFG*; however, Klein does not refer back to his own version of the story.) It would be interesting, too, if Klein had perhaps tried to speculate on why Guthrie's version was different: Was he ashamed of Clara's action? Was he not aware of the true facts? Was he trying to protect Clara's reputation?

There are a few other occasions when Klein's facts differ from Guthrie's, but overall he goes into much more depth than Guthrie attempted in his autobiography. And, through Klein, we learn more about Huntington's chorea, and how it was partly responsible for so much of Guthrie's erratic behavior, his obsession with sex, his writing erotic letters to women he did not know, and his extreme mood changes.

Choreics seemed to suffer a loss of control over a wide range of emotions and desires--sexuality, anger, depression, elation, giddiness--but the severity varied from case to case. Dr. Whitter explained to Marjorie that the illness... tailored itself to each individual, exaggerating personal characteristics that already were there, and unmasking others that had been hidden. Thus, it was fairly safe to say that disease had some effect on Woody's rhyminess and prolixity, especially the frenzied nature of his later writings (p. 441).

There is so much more in *Woody Guthrie: A Life* that could be discussed, but not everything can be covered in the space of a review. I highly recommend this book; it is the most complete biography of Guthrie ever written, and Klein thoroughly researched his subject, and presented the material in an interesting, as well as efficient and well-organized manner.

--Linda L. Painter



#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

##### *TEXAS GENESIS*, by Travis Holland (Austin: B.F. Deal, 1978)

This is a very important source for people interested in the Austin music scene of the mid-1970s. Travis Holland played bass for most of the people associated with progressive country music, including Steve Fromholz, Michael Murphy, Rusty Wier, Kenneth Threadgill, and Jerry Jeff Walker. *Texas Genesis* resulted when Travis was left in a room with a tape recorder for a few days, to undertake telling the story of those times. Since the book is an almost verbatim tape transcript, it contains endless stories about drugs and women, and interesting "horse's mouth" observations about the beginnings of that era. For example:

...it started out with rock and roll people on break going to the Chequered Flag and the Saxon Pub [two folk revival clubs], and the folk people on break going to the rock and roll clubs, and then after work all getting together somewhere and picking, and these rock and roll people discovering that they really enjoyed picking with these dudes where the song was out there, out front, and the music was the setting for it.

Rather than the music going out there and beating the hell out of people while someone was chanting an accompaniment that no one could understand. They liked it.

And the folk musicians liked having a lot of music around them, you bet. And that's what this Texas music was, a meeting between folk music and rock and roll. That's what it was. Not country (p. 81).

The copy I read, a "collector's advance printing," produced by Mike Williams, was sold at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 1978; I've never seen it in any other form. Mike Williams, who published Holland's book, also ran a small home-based record company, B.F. Deal, in the seventies. *Texas Genesis* requires much time and dedication to plough through it seeking vital parts. With a good editor it could be turned into a readable, even fascinating, book.

--Meta Bach  
Austin, Texas

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Many faithful readers of the JEMF Quarterly have been receiving our publication for ten or fifteen years or longer without ever thinking about the JEMF as an institution. Our mailing address has told subscribers that we are located at the Folklore & Mythology Center of UCLA, but the exact nature of that preposition, "at" has never been explained. Visitors to JEMF's small offices on the UCLA campus have expressed surprise at the modestness of the surroundings. Those who have dealt personally with the JEMF and its facilities and personnel over the years know that we are a tiny organization with a small staff of students and part-time help, and with insufficient funds to carry out many of the projects we have conceived.

When John Edwards, a young but knowledgeable Australian country music record collector and historian, was killed in 1960 at the age of 28, he had left a will directing that his record collection and related materials be shipped to the United States to be used to further the academic study of the music he had loved and collected. At that time, there were no serious academic programs or journals devoted to this music, and John hoped that his collection could be used to prod such a program into existence. Edwards had named his correspondent and fellow collector, Eugene Earle, as executor of his will, and Gene, together with four other scholars and collectors all devoted to the study of hillbilly music (Archie Green, Ed Kahn, D.K. Wilgus, and Fred Hoepfner) formed the John Edwards Memorial Foundation. It was the conclusion of the five--and with the full cooperation of Professor Wayland Hand, then Director of the Center for Comparative Folklore & Mythology Studies--that UCLA would be the best home for the new Foundation. Since the Foundation opened its doors (only one door, actually), it has received free office space from UCLA, but little more: it has had to raise its own funds and pay all of its own expenses. The JEMF survived in part by issuing and selling records and publications, but more importantly, through grants, gifts, contributions and occasional benefit concerts. The precariousness of this existence has long been a source of distress to those intimately involved in working for JEMF's survival. This year, the Board of Directors decided that a different *modus vivendi* had to be sought.

Accordingly, the Directors have decided to sell the physical assets of the archive to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This transfer will include all of the archival recordings, books, song folios, sheet music, catalogs, magazines, vertical files of biographical and historical ephemera, and index files. The commitment from UNC was negotiated by Professor Daniel Patterson, pre-eminent folklorist at that institution, and a member of JEMF's Board of Advisors for several years. Patterson secured from UNC, in addition to the funds for outright purchase and promised space, a commitment to provide two graduate assistantships for at least two years to attend to the maintenance of the collection and to assist in making materials available to the public as they have been while the collection was at UCLA. We will provide readers with more details about the new circumstances of the JEMF collection as affairs are settled.

The LP recordings that JEMF has produced will be sold to Chris Strachwitz, owner of Arhoolie Records and Down Home Music. Chris has indicated a desire to maintain the JEMF albums in print, to keep the label name itself active, and to support the production of further albums on our label. The name, "John Edwards Memorial Foundation," will be changed to the "John Edwards Memorial Forum," and the principal activity of this new entity will be to continue the publication of the *JEMF Quarterly* and other occasional publications and sound recordings. Professor Patrick Ford, present Director of the Folklore & Mythology Center at UCLA, is anxious to continue some relationship with JEMF, and has agreed to our continuing to use an office at the Center as the locus of activity for production of the *Quarterly*.

In writing this account, I have tried to avoid the tone of either defeatism or triumph. There is no denying that the dreams of the founders of the JEMF over two decades ago have not been matched by reality within the walls of California's illustrious southern university campus. On the other hand, we have much to be proud of. We have led the way, in both printed and recorded media, toward the acceptance of country music and its related folk-derived forms as a subject for serious study at American educational institutions. In a more intangible way, we have been partly responsible for the contemporary country music industry's realization that it had an obligation to foster the study of, and respect for, the music to which it owes its existence. And as it has become apparent that country music's acceptance is nearly complete, we have turned our attention to other aspects of American vernacular music (e.g., folk-rock, gospel, and ethnic musics) and music-related culture to pursue the same goals in those areas.

We plan, then, to continue *JEMFQ* as a magazine that straddles the gap between the scholarly and the popular orientations, with the object of its attention being all forms of American vernacular music--that is, the music of America's subcultures, from hillbilly to western to blues to ethnic to folk-revival to rock. Whether such a venture will be financially feasible remains to be seen. There is no time for pats on our collective back for past accomplishments; the pats will be reserved for the subscribers, supporters, and contributors who will make this new status possible.

--Norm Cohen  
Executive Secretary, JEMF

## LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Again, as usual, your latest issue, No. 64, of the *JEMFO*, has published some fine reports with much-needed discographical information. I am, of course, referring to the "Cohen" series and am hoping to see more of these discussions with appropriate discographics. In particular, not too much has been published of small instrumental groups and soloists who recorded extensively for various companies. Also, the popular singers of the day, and vocal groups, need to be researched discographically. This may be leading you further astray from your chosen realm of zeroing in to the many aspects of recorded folklore, but is worth mentioning, nevertheless.

Below are some additions to the Joe Hayman discography published in the article. (The listing is taken from Brian Rust's *British Music Hall on Record*).

Cohen on the Telephone: Co A1516, CoE 2190,  
Re G-6450, Cort F781

Cohen Refuses a Loan: Re G-6724 (artist  
credit as Will O.  
Patten on both sides)

Cohen 'Phones a Plumber: Re G-6724

Cohen Telephones the Health  
Department: Co A1863

Cohen's Advice: Re G-7264

Cohen's Letters: Re G-7264

Cohen Gets the Wrong 'Phone Number: Re G-7397

Cohen Proposes Matrimony: Re G-7397

Cohen and the Houseboat, Pt. 1: CoE 2779

Cohen and the Houseboat, Pt. 2: CoE 2779

Cohen, Commercial Traveler, Pt. 1: CoE 2961

Cohen, Commercial Traveler, Pt. 2: CoE 2961

Cohen and the Company Promoter: Re G-7735  
(with Fred Duprez)

Cohen, Insurance Agent: Re G-7735  
(with Fred Duprez)

Cohen Listens in to the Wireless: Re G-7871

Cohen Buys a Wireless Set: Re G-7871  
(British version)

Cohen 'Phones the Plumber: Re G-7909

Cohen 'Phones Mrs. Levi (Regarding  
a Matter o' Money): Re G-7909

Cohen on the Telephone: CoE 4036, CoAu 4036

Cohen at the Races: Aco G.15833

Cohen on Wembley: Aco G.15833

Cohen 'Phones Hil Builder: Aco G.15878

Cohen Still 'Phoning His Builder!: Aco G.15878

Cohen at a Prize Fight: R-Z T5239  
Cohen Forms a New Company: R-Z T5239  
Cohen on Telephone Department: R-Z T5831  
(Dec. 3, 1982)

Also, here are some new data pertaining to  
the "Cohen" series. [all records by Monroe  
Silver.]

Imperial (E) 957 Cohen Phones the Gas  
Company/Cohen Phones the Exchange (both  
by Billy Whitlock & Harry Bluff)  
Vocalion 14064 is also on Homochord (E) H.180  
(as Murray Gold)  
Cohen Takes His Friend to the Opera: Vo 14282  
(with Steve Porter) (two sides)  
Supertone 9125 and GEX 1245 (both as Mike  
Silver; both from Gennett 9066)  
Cameo 539 same as Tremont 486  
Emerson 10176 (both titles on Medallion 8178,  
also possibly Symphonola--number unk.)  
Emerson 10232 (both titles on Medallion 8211,  
also possibly Symphonola--number unk.)  
Silvertone 2105 (possibly also on Federal  
5105 and Resona 75105).  
Regal 991 Cohen on Prohibition/Cohen's New  
Auto (both from Emerson)  
Regal 991 both titles on Puritan 9130, Puritan  
11189, Famous 5095, possibly Triangle  
(number unk.)  
Triangle 15060 same as Puritan (BD&M) 15060,  
possibly also on Claxtonola 80069  
Banner 2045 Cohen Listening to the Radio  
(1096- ) & Cohen at the Movies (1095- )  
both titles also on Regal 9328, Paramount  
33117, Puritan/Triangle 9117, Claxtonola  
10117

--Louis W. Pyritz  
Menasha, Wisconsin

Dear Editor:

Again your publication has come forward with some really enlightening western swing reading. The Spring/Summer 1982 double issue with its heavy coverage of western swing legend Hank Penny puts in print for all to see what my "swingin' west" listeners have been requesting for three years. Again, it's Ken Griffis who comes through with this great material. Rich Kienzle's discography should also be applauded.

Ken Griffis should also be thanked for the very appropriate obituary on departed American folk hero Jimmy Wakely. Maybe someday this super talent can be the subject of a discographical listing.

The *JEMFQ* has done this sort of greatness in the past and now again! Keep up the good work!

--Mike Gross  
WSHU-FM  
Fairfield, Connecticut

Dear Editor:

On the subject of the term *western swing*, it seems that it is commonly accepted that it did not arise until Spade Cooley was dubbed the King of it in the mid-1940s. The question remains of who originated the label, Spade or entrepreneur Foreman Phillips. My friend Hank Penny insists it was Cooley, as Phillips was opposed to the idea behind western swing, improvisation, and would not coin a phrase contrary to his beliefs.

Recently, Mark Humphrey interviewed Merle Travis (*Old Time Music* 37; Spring 1982), one of the musicians who worked with Penny on the West Coast. Travis states: "A fellow named Foreman Phillips came up with that name. There was an Oklahoma boy, half Indian, named Spade Cooley, working for him, and he tagged the name 'King of Western Swing' on him. Roy Rogers was a very good friend of Spade's, and he was called 'King of the Cowboys', and Foreman Phillips said, 'There's a good idea, I'll call Spade "King of Western Swing."'"

Hank Penny also says that in the thirties, the music was known as "Texas fiddle band" music. However, in interviewing musicians in the Bob Wills, Bill Boyd, and Light Crust Doughboy organizations (as well as numerous others in the Dallas/Fort Worth area), I have found nobody using that term. In fact, there was no term used by Texas musicians other than simply *dance music*. Penny was from Alabama, and therefore some distinction had to be made between Alabama bands and Texas bands.

Incidentally, to further complicate the matter: there was a band called the Carolina Cotton Pickers that recorded a tune for ARC in Augusta, Georgia, on 24 June 1936. The tune was called "Western Swing." Has anybody heard this record? It might prove enlightening.

--Cary Ginell  
University of California  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Editor:

I must call your attention to a glaring error in the review of the two books on Woody Guthrie in Vol. XVIII Nos. 65/66. Ms. Painter mentioned Woody's "discovery of the International Workers of the World." This is a common error, but one I would not expect in *JEMFQ*. The IWW is the *Industrial workers of the World* and has been since it was founded in 1905.

The next is probably a minor point. In the review of the Smithsonian Collection of Country Music, you give a listing on page 42 (No. 65/66) of the titles with ones designated "first LP issue." I'm not sure if this is from your research or if the Smithsonian did it. At least two of the recordings were previously issued on LPs (perhaps more). "Ragged But Right" is on "Old Time Greats Vol. 1," an album of Riley Puckett's recordings reissued by CHP records of West Germany (and later on Old Homestead 114 in the U.S.). The Milton Brown recording of "My Mary" is on the album "Taking Off" (String 804).

Sorry to sound so critical--mostly I'm not for I find the *JEMFQ* useful and enjoyable.

--Bob Bovee  
June Apple  
Musician's Co-op  
Minneapolis, MN

[The listing on page 42 of the selections on the Smithsonian LP is a photograph taken of the LP itself.--Ed.]



#### CORRECTIONS

##### JEMFQ No. 65/66

"The Hank Penny Discography: 1938-1980," by Rich Kinezle: On the ARC session at Gayoso Hotel, Memphis Tennessee, it was 3 July 1939 not 8 July as printed; The final Decca recording session occurred on 5 April 1957 (no date was listed).

The correct volume number for issue 65/66 is XVIII, not XVII as printed on its front cover.

EARLY KNOXVILLE RADIO (1921-41):  
WNOX AND THE "MIDDAY MERRY GO-ROUND"

By Willie J. Smyth

During the "golden years of radio," between the mid-1930s and the 1950s, Knoxville, Tennessee, radio stations provided channels for the development of the careers of a spectacular list of performers. WNOX, Tennessee's oldest station and number eight in age nationwide, came to be known as a "stepping stone to the Grand Ole Opry" because of the number of stars recruited for the Opry from WNOX stages. Many people claim that because of WNOX Knoxville could have become the country music capitol of the world.

Knoxville has long been recognized for its role in the development and dissemination of country music. Charles Wolfe, in particular, has drawn attention to the contributions of Knoxville's musicians to the early recording industry. In 1924, the Aeolian-Vocalian Company recruited singers Charlie Oaks and George Reneau from Knoxville to journey to New York and become (along with Am Stuart and Uncle Dave Macon) Tennessee's first country music stars.<sup>1</sup> Vocalion continued to play an important role in encouraging early Tennessee musicians by maintaining talent scouts and distributing records through Knoxville's Sterchi Brothers' Furniture Company.<sup>2</sup> Knoxville has received additional notoriety for being an early center for fiddle contests and "old-harp" singing schools.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, little information has surfaced about the role of Knoxville radio in the history of country music. This neglect is at least partially because scholars of country music have had little tangible subject matter to examine. Unlike the processes involved in trying to understand a singer or a song through a study based on interviewing artists or listening to phonograph records, the method of discerning the nature and importance of early radio shows has been impeded by the inavailability of the artistic product itself.<sup>4</sup> Only in the past few years have scholars realized the importance of documenting country music radio history and have begun searching for and examining radio transcription discs and other related data. This article assembles newspaper clippings, interviews, and a transcription disc to explore the first twenty years of Knoxville's WNOX--from its inception in 1921 until 1941.

WNOX had an inauspicious beginning as a primitive radio station built in 1921 by Stuart Adcock for the People's Telephone and Telegraph Company.

The station operated under the call letters WNAV at all of fifty watts and was probably housed in the basement of the company's Vine Avenue and Market Street building.

Adcock operated WNAV for the next few years, eventually building larger studios for the station in the St. James Hotel. An official broadcasting license was granted to WNAV in April, 1925. Shortly after this Adcock purchased the station for \$3,000 and applied to the Department of Commerce for a change of call letters. Thus, WNOX was born.

It was about this time that WNOX broadcast "Mac and Bob," probably the first of a long list of famous hillbilly performers to work for that station. Lester McFarland recalls how he and Bob Gardner came to WNOX:

Radio was just a toy then [1925]. We heard a guy singing out of key and decided, if they would let him sing, they would let us. They didn't have auditions--we put on a half-hour program. The manager of the station said he couldn't pay us anything but if we would come back next week he would pay us ten bucks. We were back.<sup>5</sup>

In 1927, Adcock sold WNOX to the Sterchi Brothers Furniture Company for the same amount as his purchase price. Sterchi Brothers maintained two studios--one located in the store's basement, which was used primarily for playing records, making station breaks and some recordings--the other, housed on the mezzanine floor of the St. James Hotel, which was used for live broadcasts and occasionally for recording. Joe E. Epperson, an engineer for WNOX from 1928 to 1943, describes the situation:

When I joined the station in 1928, this [basement] studio was used for a 1 1/2 hour program of recordings from noon to 1:30 daily. The St. James Studio was used for live originations and for recordings when desired. The schedule at that time included a two hour program on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday nights. I remember such programs as Roger and Baxter Williams with Ruth Ferrel at the piano, Harry Nides violinist, and one program which ran for an

extended period on Saturday evenings. The MC was known as "Pay Cash Taylor" and the program was sponsored by JFG Coffee Co., Lay Packing Co. and others. There were remote point program pick-ups of local orchestras like Maynard Baird and his Orchestra, Skeet Talent, etc. Roger Williams and a person named Bob Anderson were the main announcers in those early days.<sup>6</sup>

Epperson remembers there being a number of hillbilly performers and shows but could not give specific details. Some facts about country performers on WNOX can be reconstructed from other sources, however. An extract from the *Brunswick 'Dixie' Supplement 1928* reads:

The Tennessee Ramblers challenge any four-string band to an open contest for World's Championship. We advise any band seriously considering taking up this challenge to first hear 'Brunswick' record no. 257, [or to] tune in on Radio Station WNOX, Knoxville, Tennessee, some night and hear this band which is a regular program feature on this station.

Dwight Butcher while fifteen to sixteen years old worked on WNOX. It was there that he met Hugh Cross who had his own show from 1926-29. This was just before Cross was "discovered" and left for New York to record, and for WLS Chicago to perform.

In 1929 Brunswick-Vocalion held a recording session in the St. James Hotel studios. It should be assumed that at least some of the local talent which was recorded also played on WNOX.<sup>7</sup> Sterchi Brothers, as well as owning the WNOX studios in which the Brunswick-Vocalion recording session took place, was also the largest East Tennessee distributor for Brunswick records, for phonographs, and for radio sets.

At this date phonograph records were still more influential with country music fans than radio shows, if one can judge by the size of the audience that each reached. Radio was still somewhat of a novelty in 1928-29; few homes had them. The Federal Radio Commission estimates that in 1924 there were 4 million radio sets in homes--one for every ten houses; in 1927 there were 10 million sets--30 percent of homes had one; and in 1936 there were 23 million--two for every three households.<sup>8</sup>

Radio sets in 1928 were expensive and of inferior quality. Joe Epperson describes the 1928 Knoxville "state of the art" equipment:

Generator supplies were necessary for the transmitter vacuum tubes since the tubes required "d-c." All a-c transmitter operation hadn't reached a state of perfection at that time. In fact, the majority of radio receivers were battery-operated, as radios using alternating current were just beginning to appear. The ones in use at that time usually had

a built in a-c hum. Majestic, Philco and others were just beginning to manufacture a-c radios.<sup>9</sup>

In 1930, while still under Sterchi Brothers ownership, WNOX moved their studios to the seventeenth floor of the Andrew Johnson Hotel. In May, 1932, Sterchi Brothers sold WNOX to Liberty Life Insurance Co. of Greenville, South Carolina, for \$50,000. On 5 December 1935 Liberty Life sold the station to Continental Radio Co. (the radio subsidiary of E.W. Scripps Co.) for \$125,000. The large cash appreciation in such a short time is testimony to the rising popularity of radio.

The acquisition of WNOX by Continental or E.W. Scripps Co. (Scripps-Howard) was pivotal in Knoxville country music history. The fact that Scripps also owned Knoxville's largest newspaper, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, proved helpful to WNOX. A review of the newspaper from 1934-38 shows a dramatic increase in coverage of the station's programs beginning directly after the Scripps's purchase. Fortunately, the *News-Sentinel* staff's interest in the success of WNOX has left a wealth of information (in the form of articles, pictures, radio logs, and advertisements) about the station's shows and performers.

By 1935 radio had proven itself to be a commercially viable enterprise. The accessibility of relatively inexpensive sets--now almost all run by alternating current--and the attractive programming offered by stations helped radio to surpass the phonograph as the most popular audio home entertainment mechanism.

Live radio shows or block programming were also being discovered to be the most popular radio format. George Biggar, ex-Director of the WLS "National Barn Dance," writes:

People want to hear the same type of program for several hours without turning the dials. Very few folk [hillbilly] musical programs of 15 to 30 minutes duration--spotted between other types of radio shows--have ever been successful. A minimum of one hour seems essential for building sizeable [and profitable] audiences for this type of program.<sup>10</sup>

An example of the importance of radio to early country performers is the fact that in 1936 the Monroe Brothers turned down an offer to make phonograph records because their live shows and radio appearances were so successful. In February, 1936, when they were doing daily radio shows in Greenville, South Carolina, and Charlotte, North Carolina, Eli Oberstein, Victor A&R man, sent the Monroe Brothers a telegram stating "We must have the Monroe Brothers on records stop we won't take no for an answer.". Because of the success of the Monroe Brothers's shows and radio appearances the offer held little interest and was turned down. After some persistence by Oberstein they finally agreed to go to a 17 February 1936 recording session.<sup>11</sup>

New ownership of WNOX brought a new staff. Richard Westergaard became station manager. In a Fall 1982 telephone interview, Westergaard told me that he immediately tried to establish shows that would capture a large rural audience. Toward this end he hired Lowell Blanchard, a young announcer just out of the University of Illinois, whom he had known previously when both worked for a radio station in Des Moines, Iowa.

Blanchard had studied dramatics and broadcasting during his university years. He was a self-trained emcee who prided himself in his acting ability--especially his character portrayal involving regional dialects. Invited to join this growing station, Blanchard left WXYZ in Detroit and headed for Knoxville--a move which was to influence the lives of hundreds of country music performers.

Blanchard began his twenty-eight-year stay at WNOX in late January, 1936. Upon arriving, Westergaard told him, "You are to become a hillbilly. Bring us hillbilly performers. Entertain with them as one of them." At this date two live hillbilly shows were being aired daily: Archie Campbell, known as "Grandpappy," had a fifteen minute late afternoon program; and "Roy Acuff and the Crazy Tennesseans" performed from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. Blanchard's first permanent WNOX job was to emcee and built up the "Crazy Tennesseans" show.

Roy Acuff had been playing with his band(s) in the Knoxville area since 1933. Radio logs indicate that the "Crazy Tennesseans" show began as a daily feature around 15 January 1935, and thus had existed for a year before Lowell Blanchard arrived.

Blanchard wanted to implement his ideas about successful entertaining. His first move was to organize a show which could be seen as well as heard. In order to cater to a studio audience the noon show was expanded to one hour and fifteen minutes and moved to the Old Sentinel building, then again moved to the second floor of the old Market House where remote broadcasts began. Admission was five cents per person. Spurred by a flood of advertising in the *News-Sentinel* and a lot of talented performers, crowds quickly began to fill the hall. A 9 March 1936 *News-Sentinel* advertisement indicates that Blanchard's programming ideas were taking effect:

The "Crazy Tennesseans" are dressing up this week, really changing things about. This week they offer new costumes, new acts, a better show and what have you. According to Lowell Blanchard, "Master of Ceremonies," these changes are being made in order to give the visible as well as the radio audience a more professional show. "Grandpappy" might even get something new in the act.

Blanchard had begun what he was to become most famous for doing: polishing up acts, creating

new gimmicks and material, and developing professional entertainers.

With the extended time, more performers were brought into the program. The "Crazy Tennesseans" soon became more than Roy Acuff and the original band. For reasons which may be difficult to ascertain Acuff and his band left WNOX in March, 1936, to play on WROL, Knoxville's only other station. Some speculate that a disagreement (over whether the new revenues being brought in by the popular noon show would be shared with the performers) between Acuff and Program Director John Mayo led to Roy's simultaneous resignation/dismissal.

Blanchard was left with a big gap to fill with the absence of this talented group (which was moved from WROL to the Grand Ole Opry in 1938). The fact that WNOX's noon show continued to grow in popularity is a tribute to Blanchard's skill as an emcee, performer, and talent hunter. After Roy Acuff's departure, the show's name was immediately changed to the "Midday Merry Go-Round." Radio logs first list the show under this name on 18 March 1936.

An array of talented performers was recruited to replace Acuff's group. The "Tennessee Ramblers" became the show's main hillbilly band.<sup>12</sup> In a Fall 1982 telephone interview Mack Sievers (dobro player for the Ramblers) spoke to me about the band's beginning on the "Midday Merry Go-Round":

We had a regular show by ourselves which was sponsored by J.F.G. [Coffee Company]. Then John Mayo and Lowell brought us on to the "Midday Merry Go-Round" when Roy went to WROL. At that time the Ramblers consisted of myself on dobro; my sister Willie on guitar; our Dad "Fiddlin' Bill" Sievers; the Rainey Brothers from Petros who played guitars and banjo; and "Kentucky Slim" [Charles Ezra]. Our family did mostly novelty and Hawaiian numbers, the Raineys added real nice harmonies, and "Kentucky Slim" was our comedian.

Newspaper listings indicate that other regulars on these early 1936 shows included: "The Buckeye Buckaroos" (personnel unknown), "Guy Campbell and his fiddle," "The Tropical Islanders with Ed, Reese, and Roy--all playing Hawaiian guitars," "Grandpappy," "Lost John Miller" (singer, guitar player, and fiddler), and Arthur Q. Smith (singer/songwriter).

Dennis and Louise Shehan, who worked at WNOX during the early years of the "Merry Go-Round" recalled how the shows were organized:

Lowell would write out a schedule which gave everyone about ten to fifteen minutes. They'd get in three or four songs, then there would be a commercial from Scalphy's Indian River Tonic. Lowell would regulate the performers--get them on and off in time--



Standing l to r: Cliff Stier, Homer Haines,  
Guy Campbell; seated: Tommy Covington, Tony  
Musco



Long lines outside WNOX's Gay Street studio



A remote broadcast from the Old Lyric Theatre

**WNOX**

CARNIVAL  
STARTING

SATURDAY  
MARCH 21st

8:30 P.M. - - - ?  
MARKET HALL

**85**

ENTERTAINERS  
INCLUDING

- ★ Colonel Lowell Blanchard
- ★ Grand Pappy
- ★ Lost John
- ★ Tennessee Ramblers
- ★ Trixie, The Wonder Dog
- ★ Buckeye Buckaroo's
- ★ Jo-Jo, The Monkey
- ★ Orchestras—Snappy Music
- ★ Mountain Music
- ★ Three Maids
- ★ The Bluebird
- ★ The World's Smallest  
Organ

SOUVENIRS  
FOR EVERYBODY

ADULTS ..... 25c  
CHILDREN ..... 10c  
SEATS FOR ALL



Standing l to r: Tony Carlisle,  
Shannon Grayson; seated: Bill and  
Cliff Carlisle

and he would tell them what he thought would and wouldn't go over with the audience. He provided a lot of the comedy, too, but mostly he polished up musicians. He used to say "We educate 'em, and Nashville gets 'em."<sup>13</sup>

March 21, 1936 brought another live hillbilly show to WNOX. Blanchard and the regulars of the "Merry Go-Round" presented an extended version of the noon show at the Market Hall on Saturday nights. Additional performers were added to the 8:30-10:00 p.m. show. Admission was twenty-five cents. This show, first called the WNOX "Carnival," was to become the "Tennessee Barn Dance" in 1942.

Both the "Midday Merry Go-Round" and "Carnival" continued to draw full houses at the Market Hall. On 24 May 1936 WNOX began broadcasting from new studios at 110 South Gay Street. Both shows moved from the Market Hall to a new 800-seat auditorium which was built to handle the growing audiences.

The 30 May 1936 newspaper listing of "Carnival" performers shows a new group called the "Stringdusters." This band included Kenneth (Dude or Jethro) Burns on mandolin, his brother Aytchie on guitar and bass, Henry (Junior or Homer) Haynes on guitar, and Charlie Hagaman on rhythm guitar. The "Burns Brothers" had their own show on WNOX for about six weeks before adding Haynes and Hagaman and joining the "Merry Go-Round." The "Stringdusters" stayed together as regulars on WNOX until 1939 when Burns and Haynes left for Renfro Valley, Kentucky, to become part of the "Renfro Valley Barn Dance."

"Homer" Haynes and "Jethro" Burns became, of course, the famous comedy duo "Homer and Jethro." Burns remembers how Lowell Blanchard influenced them:

We had just been given the names "Homer" and "Jethro" by Lowell Blanchard. This guy taught us so much about show business. I hung around him and picked his brain, because I knew that he knew all the stuff I wanted to know. Really, I give him credit for everything I've ever done, because without him, I wouldn't have done anything. He couldn't teach me how to play, but he taught me how to talk, sing, and all the other stuff I had to know.<sup>14</sup>

Under Lowell Blanchard's coaching many performers found themselves becoming polished entertainers. Blanchard had a keen eye for spotting and developing what the rural audience wanted. He could instruct performers on the art of ad-libbing, doing gags, and weaving stories between songs. Archie Campbell of "Grand Ole Opry" and "Hee-Haw" fame said that Blanchard was instrumental in the development of Archie's "Grandpappy" character. "Lowell would help write scripts and

gags for 'Grandpappy.' He would also have a store of jokes for us to use."<sup>15</sup>

The comedy, hillbilly, and variety (the "Stringdusters," for example, often would play a progressive "country jazz") format of these shows proved to be an immense success. Local businesses were clamoring to buy advertising space. Nevertheless, the performers were not all growing rich from the station's profits. For the most part they had to supplement their salaries by performing at local schools, halls, or wherever. The radio shows would be used to plug the outside appearances of the performers. Blanchard would book both local and traveling performers into jobs in Knoxville and surrounding areas, usually touring with them as emcee.

The promise of a job playing for WNOX began to bring musicians from out of town during these post-Depression years. A list of performers on the "Merry Go-Round" the week of September 17-24, 1936, shows the addition of several regulars from out of state. "Monk and Sam" (Charlie Henson and Sam Johnson), a comedy group; "Pee Wee" King, famous singer and composer of "Tennessee Waltz"; and "Curly Miller and his Ploughboys" all came to WNOX more or less directly from WHAS in Louisville.

In January, 1937, Lowell Blanchard hired a group called the "Dixieland Swingsters." They were to remain the "Merry Go-Round" staff band for the next twenty-five years. Dave Durham, the band's fiddler and trumpet player, tells how the band got started:

I was WHAS Louisville playing with Clayton McMichen, Slim Bryant, and the Georgia Wildcats from 1930-35. In about 1935 we broke up. Slim wanted to keep a country band and wanted me to go to Pittsburgh with them (but I didn't). I had a chance to leave with Gene Autry, too, but was married and decided to stay in Louisville and play trumpet with Clayton's Dixieland band. That's when I started working [playing fiddle] with Pee Wee King. I travelled with him a bit, but all at once Pee Wee decided to move to Knoxville. I stayed up there [Louisville] playing on WHAS with a group of my own until that folded in the fall of 1936. At that point I said I better go to Knoxville, so I went to the "Merry Go-Round" to see Pee Wee and Lowell Blanchard. We had put a group together in Knoxville and had a night-club job offer. Lowell said to hold off on any offers because he wanted us for staff band. Well, we got the job about the middle of January. Then [one of the band members] Cecil Bell, he was a clarinet player, decided he didn't like country music, so he left. Our band ended up being Jerry Collins, piano; Cliff Stier, bass; Buck Houchens,

fiddle, sax, and clarinet; Larry Downing, guitar; and myself on trumpet and fiddle.<sup>16</sup>

Pee Wee King stayed at WNOX for only a few more months, then moved to the Grand Ole Opry and WSM, Nashville. Curley Miller moved to WMNN, Fairmont, West Virginia, then to the WWVA "Jamboree" in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Dozens of talented performers were attracted to the WNOX stages and the "Midday Merry Go-Round" in the next few years. A complete list of regular and guest performers (from 1936-41) would total in the hundreds. Capitulating to lack of space, I will mention only some of the performers who became regulars on WNOX.

Buck "Huckleberry" Fulton, a singer/guitar player noted for his "country rube" humor, appeared as a regular from 1937 until the early 1940s. He would either solo or play with groups such as "Huckleberry and His Rangers" or "Huckleberry and the Tennessee Mountaineers." The "Mountaineers" played throughout East Tennessee. This group included Guy Campbell, fiddle; Bob Bennett, guitar and vocals; Buddy Wilson, guitar; and Smoky Mountain Rose, steel guitar.

In mid-1938, just after he and Bill split up their famous brother duo, Charlie Monroe was hired by Lowell Blanchard. Charlie's band at first consisted of Bill Calhoun, guitar and vocals; and "Lefty" Frizzell, mandolin (not the more famous recording artist). Zeke Morris then replaced Frizzell on mandolin. From WNOX the group moved to WDBJ, Roanoke. Charlie returned to WNOX for occasional jobs in the late 1940s and became a regular again in 1951-52.

In late 1938 the Vaughn Four, a gospel quartet who changed their name in 1940 to the Swannee River Boys, played regularly on WNOX and the "Merry Go-Round." This group consisted of baritone and guitarist; Stacy Abner, high tenor; Buford Abner, lead; Merle Abner, bass and, for a while, piano player.<sup>17</sup>

In 1939 Archie Campbell's group, Grandpappy and His Gang, consisted of Archie, Doug Dalton on mandolin, Gene McGee on guitar, Charlie Pickle on bass, a young tap dancer named Pete Hines, and Roy Lanham on guitar.<sup>18</sup>

Around 1940 Johnnie Wright and his brother-in-law Jack Anglin came to WNOX and formed a group with Eddie Hill which was first advertised as "Eddie Hill and His Mountain Boys." Jack was soon drafted, but Eddie and Johnnie Wright managed to keep the band together during the war years. They played under the name the "Tennessee Mountain Boys"--mostly at WNOX.

Bill Carlisle also arrived at WNOX around 1939, joined, at first, by his brother Cliff, Cliff's son, Tommy, and banjo player Shannon Grayson. Bill then began playing with Archie Campbell, doing songs and a comedy act. Bill created a character named "Hot Shot Elmer" who was always in the midst of comic antics--such as

engaging in organized "on-stage" wrestling matches with a midget named "Little Robert."

In 1941 a teenager from Luttrell, Tennessee, named Chet Atkins heard that Bill and Archie were looking for a fiddle player. Mel Foree and Tommy Covington, who were both working for WNOX at the time, heard Chet playing at a party one night. They were impressed and set up an audition for him. He got the job. Atkins recalls those early days:

The three of us started playing show dates right away. We would play high schools and theatres and small places like that. They paid me \$3 a night.... We would work together for about 20 or 30 minutes then Archie would leave stage to put on his "Grandpappy" costume, and leave Bill and me out there to entertain. Then Bill would leave me alone and I would have to play a couple of solos on guitar. That was kind of tough because I was just a beginner. I remember one day playing "Bye Bye Blues" backstage at WNOX and Cowboy Copas (who was a regular on "Midday Merry Go-Round" in 1940-41) said, "Chet, I believe you're playing the wrong chord there." He was right. Anyway, after my solos Bill and Archie would come out and do comedy, then we'd all three do a finale.

One night I was playing guitar in the back of Lowell Blanchard's car as we returned from a personal appearance. Lowell asked me how I'd like to be a staff guitarist on the station. He said that starting Monday I'd be the staff guitarist. That was 1942.<sup>19</sup>

Another regular act that appeared on WNOX around 1941 was the "Cope Brothers"--Charles on mandolin and Lester on guitar--from Bean Station. Two friends of the Copes and another important duo to appear on Knoxville radio were the "Bailey Brothers," Danny and Charlie. The Baileys, however, established themselves on WROL so will be only mentioned in passing in this short history of WNOX.

Two points about the "Midday Merry Go-Round" are worth reiterating. (1) The show had a variety show or experimental flavor; while catering to a "country" audience, the show would not contain exclusively hillbilly music--the "Stringdusters" and "Dixieland Swingsters," for example, playing a mixture of country, Dixieland, Swing, and jazz. And (2) comedy and/or levity were kings. The shows were laced with jokes and gags, many, if not most, master-minded by Lowell Blanchard. The country-comedy format of the show helped to develop some of the most popular rural comedians of our time, and also to eventually bring "country" humor respect and recognition at a national level.

I have chosen 1942 as the cut-off date for this essay because of the effect the war had on

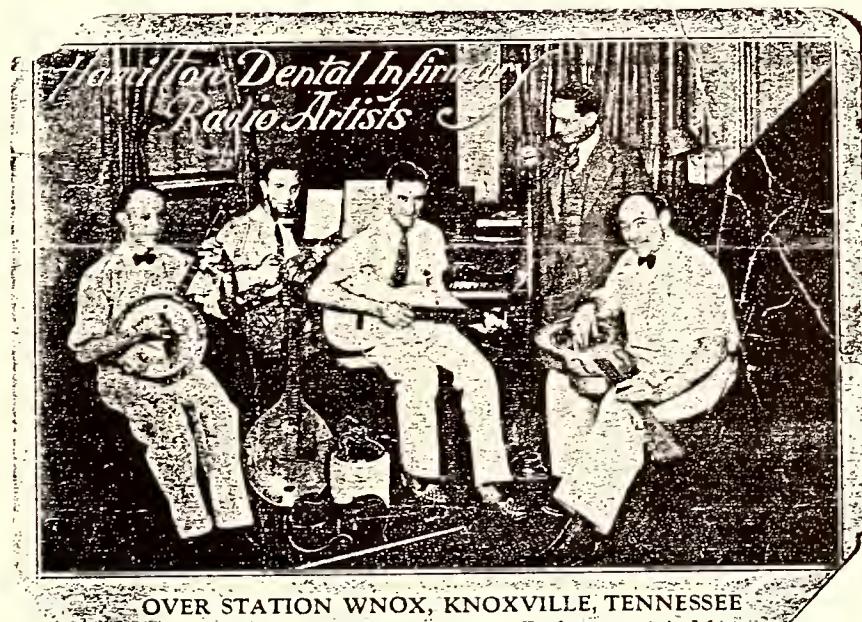
the arrangement of personnel at the "Midday Merry Go-Round." It should be apparent that even in pre-war times, many groups had ephemeral existences. Members would come and go. Even within each "Merry Go-Round" show, personnel would trade off members for purposes of "backing up," etc. World War II brought re-arrangements of even the most established groups. Members would be drafted or join the armed forces. New groups would be formed.

The post-war years would see WNOX reach its peak of popularity. The "Tennessee Barn Dance" and "Midday Merry Go-Round" attracted a constant stream of first-rate performers. Many who left for the war would come back to WNOX--other new "stars" would be discovered there. A partial list of the new personnel between 1942-55 (excluding performers already mentioned) includes Ray "Duck" Atkins, Claude Boone, Bonnie Lou and Buster, Brewster Brothers, the Carter Family (Anita, June, Helen, and Maybelle), Martha and James Carson, Colorado Mountain Boys, Leonard Dabney, Flatt and Scruggs, Wally Fowler and the

Georgia Clodhoppers, Don Gibson and His King Cotton Kinfolk, Farley Holden, "Salty" Holmes, Cotton Galyon, Lonnie Glasson, Homer Harris, Jamup and Honey, Johnson Brothers (Willie and Charlie), "Speedy" Kreis, Molly O'Day, Old Joe Clark, Emory Martin, Lilly Brothers, Louvin Brothers, Benny Martin, James Martin, Jimmy Martin, "Uncle Tom" Moore, Jimmy Murphy, Red Rector, Jack Shelton, Fred Smith, Roy Snead, Carl Story, Kitty Wells, and Mac Wiseman.

My attempt to review the content and some of the personnel from these early years of WNOX's "Midday Merry Go-Round" is in no sense meant to be definitive or complete. If this brief history serves to give the reader some sense of the importance of WNOX in the development of American country music or if it acts as a catalyst to bring out more information about WNOX and/or its performers, it will have achieved rewarding results. Any corrections/additions will be gratefully received c/o JEMF Quarterly.

--University of California  
Los Angeles, California



A Knoxville dentist sponsored many local hillbilly artists and groups such as the Southern Moonlight Entertainers (the Rainey Brothers), Cal and His Gang, and the Smokey Mountain Ramblers, all who appeared frequently on WNOX. Pictured are the Smokey Mountain Ramblers. (l to r) Ray Gully, Billy Lamb (?), Otis Elder (?), unknown, Walt McKinney.

## ADELYNE HOOD: THE AMALGAMATION OF VAUDEVILLE AND FOLK TRADITIONS IN EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC

By Mary Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann

From her 1927 recording of "Sing on Brother, Sing" with Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison to her 1945 broadcasts from Pittsburgh's WCAE as philosophical black mammy "Aunt Caroline," Adelyne Hood's career was an example of how early country music was intertwined with late nineteenth and early twentieth century popular commercial entertainment. One of the early performers and popularizers of "hillbilly" songs, Adelyne Hood also recorded dialect songs, music hall numbers, vaudeville routines, Tin Pan Alley tunes, and sentimental ballads.

The roots of country music in communally fostered folk traditions have been continually demonstrated, but more recently the deep influence of nineteenth-century show business has been revealed.<sup>1</sup> Tin Pan Alley tunes were sold and sung nationwide, providing repertoires for many early country musicians. Minstrel and vaudeville stage conventions were freely borrowed, and the hillbilly-rural image, itself a stage invention, became part of the attitude and style of country music. Adelyne Hood's career demonstrates how traditions mingled within the commercial framework.

In the early 1920s commercial recording companies discovered the popularity of old-time, folk, and hillbilly music. Vernon Dalhart, a show business veteran, became one of the most prominent popularizers of hillbilly song. In addition to his many hits as a solo artist, he performed some of his finest numbers in a trio with Carson J. Robison and Adelyne Hood. Dalhart and Robison have been extensively studied,<sup>2</sup> but the interesting career of the equally delightful Adelyne Hood has received little attention.

In many ways, Hood is Dalhart's female musical equivalent. Like him she was born in the South to a family of moderate circumstances; she received formal musical training and came to country music from show business rather than as a folk musician; she sometimes performed in darky dialect and continued the blackface minstrel tradition; and she recorded a great deal of material that can only be considered marginally "country." She emerged from the same background, appealed to a similar popular audience, and learned a great deal from Dalhart, but Hood was not simply a Dalhart imitation--she also drew from and developed the repertoire that had been cultivated by the popular female tent show and



Adelyne Hood, 1928. (photo taken from cover of "Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison's Album of Songs.")

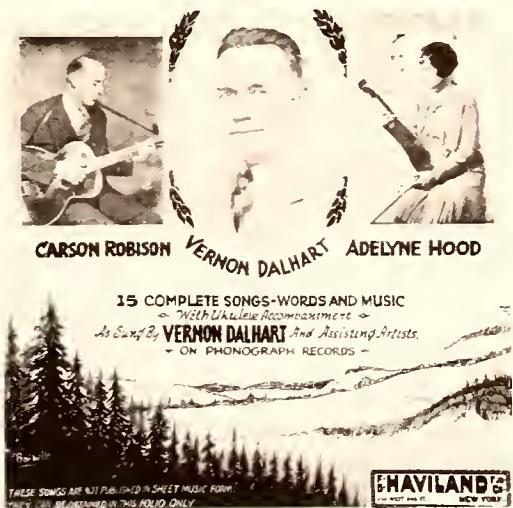
vaudeville performers of the early twentieth century.

Hood's social and musical background was better preparation for a classical music career than for popular entertainment. Born in Chester, South Carolina, in 1897, Adelyne Hood was no more a hillbilly than Dalhart, yet, like him, she later made much of her Southern upbringing and familiarity with black ways. Her parents were financially sound enough to educate her far beyond the level of most women of the day. Hood's mother, a pianist, tutored her until she graduated from high school. Colleges had begun offering liberal art courses of study for women, and Hood majored in music at Queen's College in Charlotte, North Carolina. She pursued voice and piano studies at Chicora College, Columbia, South Carolina, and then moved to New York to study piano at the New York School of Music and Arts, and violin at Juilliard. When her family moved to Tuscaloosa, Hood transferred her studies to the University of Alabama.

The outbreak of war in 1917 produced an influx of women into entertainment, and it was during this time while she was a senior at the University of Alabama that Adelyne Hood accepted an offer from the Edison Phonograph Company to demonstrate the wonders of its new sound reproducing equipment on the vaudeville circuit. These performances generally consisted of contrasting a bit of live music with a recorded version. As early as 1917 she and Vernon Dalhart were partners, for he too worked on the Edison Tone Testing Tours. The Edison engagement led Hood to a tour on the famed Keith-Orpheum circuit, but by the mid-1920s vaudeville and variety tours were being undercut by films, and Hood moved to New York where she taught music.

Dalhart's spectacular success in 1924 with the recording of "The Prisoner's Song" led him to team up with Carson Robison, a writer of popular folk-sounding songs. Dalhart had made a number of duet recordings with women (particularly Gladys Rice, from 1917-1921), but in 1927 when he brought Adelyne Hood into his group it was to be as a permanent member of a trio, two of whose members had already experienced considerable success. While it is likely that Dalhart and Hood's relationship was more than professional, Hood's skills as a fiddler, piano player, and occasional guitarist made her attractive to Dalhart, who played only harmonica and jew's harp. Her talents as a comedienne and singer also made her an invaluable member of this group which recorded variously as the Jewel Trio, the Oriole Trio, the Robison Trio, the Vernon Dalhart Trio, and the Regal Rascals.

## VERNON DALHART CARSON ROBISON'S ALBUM OF SONGS



The trio was immortalized just this once in songbook form. (photo courtesy Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center.)

The records produced by Dalhart, Robison, and Hood in 1927 and 1928 were so popular that they were issued on various labels into the early 1930s. On them the three captured the vigor of the fading vaudeville show while Robison's guitar gave the music a rural flavor. They brought the stage to life on records.

The trio's most popular recording was "Sing on Brother, Sing" backed with "Oh! Susanna" (1927). They followed this with several toe-tapping darky dialect gospel numbers: "Heah Dem Bells" (1928), "Climbing Up De Golden Stairs" (1928), and "Golden Slippers" (1928). A more secular musical romp, "Razors in De Air" (1929), is even more lively. Their more sentimental Southern songs included "On Mobile Bay" (1928), "Old Plantation Melodies" (1927), and "Sweet Elaine" (1928). Hood's charming vocal harmonies and instrumental contributions are the equal of her more celebrated partners's on these superb recordings.

Hood's flair for comedy is highlighted on the excellent minstrel and comic records billed as Vernon Dalhart-Adelyne Hood duets. The musical cleverness of "Sing Hallelujah" (1928) and "Hallelujah There's a Rainbow in the Sky" (1930) captures the playfulness and good humor of minstrel shows. Dalhart and Hood's finest moment together was unquestionably "The Frog Song" (1928), which featured absurdly funny frog imitations from both. Hood merrily trills in high soprano while Dalhart chants "Kneedeeep, Kneedeeep, Ratherdeep-Ratherdeep-Ratherdeep" on the choruses.

Adelyne Hood's reliance on the traditions of female vaudeville performers is most revealed in her uniformly self-assertive solo pieces. "Calamity Jane" (1929) was the most popular and widely imitated of her recordings. Both of her recordings of this number were billed as duets, the first with Dalhart and the second with John White (The Lonesome Cowboy), but both are really her own. This song/skit is a Western boasting song done female-style with Hood taking the part of the famous 1870s carouser and hell-raiser:

I'm Calamity Jane,  
I've blazed the trail  
and rode the plain,  
I'm fast on the draw,  
don't care for the law,  
I'm the famous Calamity Jane!

...When it comes to drinkin' likker,  
I can take a dozen men,  
And drink 'em under the tables,  
and up on their chairs again  
And if I haven't got a corkscrew,  
I never give a snatch,  
I bite off the neck of the bottle  
and throw'er right down the hatch!<sup>3</sup>

"Calamity Jane" was repeatedly reissued, and Hood's female boasts of toughness, athletic prowess, and ability to whip men on their own ground appeared on at least ten different labels. In 1932 a Fields & Hall vaudevillian, Lucy Gray, re-

corded "Calamity Jane" with the Colt Brothers along with another Adelyne Hood favorite, "The Lady that's Known as Lou." In this song, Lou declares herself to be better than the other Western folk heroines Calamity Jane, Poker Alice, and Cattle Kate, as well as male desperados like Jesse James. It has been speculated that Lucy Gray was an Adelyne Hood pseudonym, but the voice and performances on the Lucy Gray version do not match the lilt and wit of Hood's renditions.

Hood's own version was recorded earlier in 1930 under the pseudonym Betsy White and backed with a topical song about another resourceful woman "Clementine, the Bargain Queen."

The brassy woman who distrusts men and bests them at even their roughest games dominates Hood's solo recordings. "The Daughter of Calamity Jane" (1930), a sequel to "Calamity Jane," is backed by a humorous number celebrating women's opportunities to get back at negligent husbands through divorce and alimony—"Westward Ho for Reno" (1930). "He's on the Chain Gang Now" (1930) is about a black woman finding revenge, while "Madam Queen" (1930) is a two-timing black woman who keeps a rich man on the hood because he provides her with furs. "Alaska Ann and Yukon Steve" (1930) was another duet with Dalhart. Ann guns Steve down in a dispute and yells triumphantly, "So drink up, boys, for another notch on the six-gun of Alaska Ann, Whoopie!" Tough and deceitful men are no match for these women.

The Dalhart-Hood-Robison collaboration was a short one. Carson Robison left in 1928. Dalhart and Hood recorded only twice together after their recordings in 1930. In April, 1931, while performing on radio together in London, they recorded "It's Time to Say Aloha to You," and three years later recorded a fine duet "In the Valley of Yesterday" (1934). Without Robison's songs and Hood's musicianship, and with record companies folding, and the economic ruin of the Crash, Dalhart was unable to hold his own against newer performers. His recording career came to a close in 1934 as did his musical and personal relationship with Hood. Dalhart faded from the music scene, dying nearly forgotten in 1948.

Scholars have speculated that Adelyne Hood was the cause of Vernon Dalhart and Carson Robison's rather messy breakup, but Robison's opinion that "Miss Hood was a charming person,"<sup>4</sup> points to Dalhart's arrogant behavior rather than to Hood as the reason for the split. Hood's initial entrance into the Dalhart-Robison partnership in 1927 was stormy. Dalhart had fired fiddler Murray Kellner and hired Hood without consulting Robison. In a 1951 letter Robison indicated that this incident was "The beginning of the end with him and me."<sup>5</sup> Catherine Robison, Carson's widow, has stated that the real reason for the breakup was Dalhart's "signing up exclusively with Columbia Records without consulting Carson and told them they needn't worry about material because Carson would have to come along with him."<sup>6</sup> Robison was also tired of sharing his composer royal-

ties with Dalhart. Feelings between the two were so bad that a report of Dalhart's pulling a knife on Robison in their last recording session circulated for several years. Hood and Dalhart's split was inevitable. Dalhart was a married man with two children and Hood, faced with the possibilities of unemployment, had to consider her own future and career.



Vernon Dalhart getting a manicure from Adelyne Hood. (photo taken from *Radio Digest*, March 1931, p. 36; and was previously published in the Spring 1973 issue of the JEMFQ.)

In the early 1930s Adelyne Hood continued to pursue a musical career in London, but one more closely related to her previous formal training. She reportedly did orchestra-accompanied recording, but no evidence of this has appeared in any discographies to date. She could possibly have performed as a violinist on these recordings, for she is known to have given violin recitals in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

In the mid-1930s Hood returned to New York and pursued a solo career in radio work. With neither composing talents nor a band of her own, Hood tried for a broad popular appeal, not unlike that of her contemporary "The Songbird of the South," Kate Smith. Around 1936, NBC engaged Hood to record for its Thesaurus Library, a nationally-aired program that was popular throughout the late 1930s and 1940s. This work was done under the name of Adelyne Hood's paternal grandmother Betsy White, a pseudonym she had used on her 1930 recording on the Regal label "Clementine the Bargain Queen"/"I'm the Lady That's Known as Lou." She also sang for radio broadcast with orchestras conducted by such luminaries as Rudolph Friml and Ferde Grofe.

Hood's solo Thesaurus transcriptions indicate that she had learned Vernon Dalhart's repertoire thoroughly. "In the Baggage Coach Ahead," "Letter Edged in Black," and "My Mother was a

Lady" illustrate her continued reliance on nineteenth-century parlor songs. She sang traditionalals like "Old Joe Clark," "Roving Gambler," "Polly Wolly Doodle," and "Zeb Turney's Gal." Stephen Foster's "Oh! Susannah," and "Massa's in De Cole, Cold Ground" were in her repertoire, as were chestnuts like "Old Oaken Bucket," "Bird in a Gilded Cage," and "Gold Will Buy 'Most Anything.'" College songs like "Over the Bannister;" folk tunes like "I Wish I Was Single Again," and "Froggie Went A-Courtin';" country numbers like "Blue Ridge Mountain Blues" and "Over the Hills to the Poor House;" sentimental pieces like "The Lost Doll;" and songs identified with Dalhart like "Puttin' On the Style" gave her an identity as a singer of old-time tunes. The numbers by contemporary composers she performed such as "When the Moon Shines Down" (Gene Austin) and "This Old White Mule of Mine" (Bob Nolan) were not out of keeping with her more dated repertoire.

Hood's NBC Thesaurus work is pleasant but not inspired. Performing as a solo with only piano accompaniment, her delivery lacks the musical spark and inventiveness that had given the trio a contemporary dimension. Her old comic flair did, however, occasionally surface. "Since Nellie Got the Gong" was an amusing tale of a family's failed hopes at an amateur contest. Her wry rendition of "Don't Swat Your Mother, It's Mean" is a humorous break from her more sentimental mood.

Ironically, Hood's old partner, Carson Robison and His Buccaroos were recording a series of programs for NBC Thesaurus Library at the same time. The two, in fact, recorded several of the same songs for the NBC shows, and Hood credited her radio version of "I Wish I was Single Again" to Robison. Robison remained an active and creative country performer right up to the time of his death in 1957, scoring a solo hit as late as 1948 with "Life Gets Tee-Jus, Don't It?"

Hood's vivid character sketches had always been her forte and it was her dialect performance talents that brought her renewed popularity. Beginning in 1939, Hood was hired by the Quaker Oats company to play its famous Aunt Jemima trademark. Broadcasting on the popular national children's program "Dick Tracy," Hood became the first Aunt Jemima on radio.

In her radio work in the early 1940s, Hood exploited her dialect talents and resurrected the nineteenth-century minstrel blackface tradition. After two seasons as Aunt Jemima, she moved to Pittsburgh to be near her sister, who was married to Richard Plant, vice president of People's Natural Gas Company. In 1941, she introduced her Aunt Caroline character on the nation's pioneer radio station KDKA, and on the daily WCAE radio show "Aunt Caroline of the Air." Using her old Dalhart-Robison-Hood trio number "Sing Hallelujah" as her theme song, she greeted Pittsburghers each morning for nearly six years as a happy, philosophical mammy.<sup>8</sup> *The Bulletin Index*, a Pittsburgh weekly news magazine, commented:



(l) Adelyne Hood at age 44; (r) as Aunt Caroline (photo taken from *The Bulletin Index*, 19 March 1942).

Chief distinction of the WCAE program does not lie in the hearty spirituals, but rather in the well-nigh perfect Negro dialect and easy hedonism in which she states her rather ambiguous philosophies: "Wealth is not all. We only live once." Last week middle-aged red-headed Hood celebrated her first anniversary as Aunt Caroline. To her 9 a.m. audience of lounging housewives and late breakfasters she announced: "Life is too short to reap, we only have time to sow."<sup>9</sup>

Her black folklore, minstrel songs, and hymns drew a broad audience, and some members of Pittsburgh's black community (then, as now, centered in an area called the Hill District) evidently believed she was one of their own.

...fair, plump Adelyn Hood...has...a drawl so unmistakably possum & sweet potatoes that a large & happy percentage of her morning radio audience has no doubts as to her color, pen warm invitations to Hill District jive parties and other assorted social activities.<sup>10</sup>

The Aunty character developed by Hood has a long history, and Hood's use of old-time folk and dialect material is an example of how popular folk-based white, black, and ethnic culture is carried in popular commercial entertainment. Professional entertainers have long relied on the population at large for their material; and they have used stereotypes of marginal people to voice the social criticism that is so popular with mass audiences. Comedy that attacks the privileged and glorifies the plain has been the

backbone of popular entertainment. The fool, the tramp, the rustic, the ethnic, and the black have all been the voices for such popular sentiment. Comic dialogs between urban sophisticates and country rustics appeared in print in America as early as the 1830s. On the stage it was the simple rustic "Brother Jonathan," taken from the regional culture of New England, who showed the hypocrisy of civilization and the problems of the growing cities.<sup>11</sup> Ballyhooing frontiersmen carried the same message, and the Bowery Boys, products of the urban milieu, maintained the subversive characteristics of the rustics by attacking the rich and elevating the common city dweller. The popularity of the minstrel blackface performers was in large part due to a unique and lively folk-based humor often derived from blacks themselves. White audiences laughed at black minstrel characters, but they also laughed with them as they turned the tables on those with social position.

Female equivalents to male vaudeville characters did not emerge until the end of the nineteenth century when growing numbers of women entered the stage. Before this, men played the female roles and created many grotesque parodies. Women were initially more appreciated for their bottoms and bosoms than their wit. But as vaudeville became increasingly family-oriented with a more diverse audience, women were added as comediettes. Following in the old tradition of popular humor, they created female characters that also glorified the common woman. In the late 1890s Rose Melville set a style for women rustic comediettes that has survived to this day when she developed the character Sis Hopkins. Sis was the counterpart of the rustic boy Toby. With pigtailed hair, shapeless dress, and hanging petticoat she was the quintessential comic country girl. Country performers like Lulu Belle, Cousin Emmy, and the movies's madcap comedienne Judy Canova cultivated a similar image. It was so identified with rural rustics that it was also the costume adopted by black vaudevillians like Josephine Baker and Moms Mabley.

The more common pattern for women vaudevillians, however, was to impersonate a wide range of ordinary women. Increasing urbanization and industrialization in late nineteenth-century American brought many women into the work world as domestics and machine operatives. Popular art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century often nostalgically portrayed a longed-for rural past, but it also integrated this new social order. Women performers followed in the steps of Ada Jones, who from 1904-1922 recorded vaudeville skits as an English Cockney, a German immigrant, an Indian squaw, an Irish colleen, an Italian girl, a Jewish mother, a Scottish maid, a "Society" matron, a Southern black, an urban tough, a Western cowgirl, a vamp, a hillbilly, and a wide variety of working girls. In 1908, Irene Franklin was one of the most popular women in vaudeville because of her everyday-life characterizations. Vaudeville's singing comediettes,

May Irwin, Nora Bayes, and Kitty Cheatham, used songs and material from many folk sources.

This was the show business tradition that produced Adelyne Hood. It is not at all unusual that she cultivated dialect performance for she was exposed to this popular humor and to these women performers when they were at their height. Although minstrel shows were on the wane, Marie Dressler delighted audiences with her coon songs through the early 1900s, and Sophie Tucker made her reputation performing black-derived blues, religious, and novelty songs for white audiences.

When Hood performed radio blackface in the 1930s and 1940s, blacks themselves were systematically excluded from most areas of entertainment for white audiences. Relying on sound for effect, radio continued the tradition of blackface long after it lost its stage appeal. In 1939, when Adelyne Hood took on the role of Aunt Jemima, there were still five teams performing blackface on radio; and "Amos and Andy" was wildly popular.



Aunt Caroline as she appeared in the 2 March 1944 issue of Pittsburgh's *The Bulletin Index* (p. 12)

Aunt Jemima and Adelyne Hood's Aunt Caroline have roots in the stage counterpart to the black Uncle Tom, but the image retained integrity as a voice of black people much longer. The tough but tender black matriarch, who met difficult situations with strength, insight, and humor was celebrated in "Aunt Dinah Roe," a song from the 1870s.<sup>12</sup> In the late 1930s, within the confines of movie roles as black mammies and servants, Louise Beavers and Hattie McDaniel created char-

acters with depth and mass popularity. In her Aunt Caroline character, Hood seems to have stuck close to this limited and romanticized black female image. In a society increasingly confronted with an angry black population demanding equality and integration this figure eased white anxiety. Though limited, it was a role which gave black women dignity and allowed them to retain an earthy black attitude.

Comic and ethnic female characters offered mass audiences a wide range of entertainment and offered white women performers a more interesting range of roles. In country music the "gingham sweetheart" or the "mother" gave women little freedom, but country women comedienne, like the marginal fool, could say more and do more-- even vent hostility toward men and make claims to equality. In her early songs as a cowboy girl and a black woman, Adelyne Hood creates comic figures who are not naive girls, but women with adult experience. Although we laugh at these women, we are not really laughing at women, for they are parodies of extreme male behavior. We laugh at the woman who turns the tables on men, and through these characters, male behavior is highlighted and scorned. Hood was not the romanticized cowgirl like Patsy Montana and others who followed in country music, but a boasting cowboy girl who kept alive the subversive quality of popular comedy entertainment. In her black "Aunt Caroline," Hood retained a critical humor and held a mirror up to society.

By the mid-1940s when Adelyne Hood married Pittsburgh food broker Alfred J. Phipps and retired Aunt Caroline and her other rustic comic characters, hillbilly and black performers were moving uptown. Dale Evans and Dorothy Shay, "The Park Avenue Hillbilly," added glamor to the female country image, and black women entering white mass entertainment were cultivating white images. Beulah had become an Uncle Tom and was replaced by the light-skinned beauty. Lena Horne and Hazel Scott claimed their rights as cultivated poised citizens, often refusing to appear before segregated audiences. It would take the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement of the 1960s to recognize the strength of the folk-derived humor preserved in the comedy of Moms Mabley.

The last years of Adelyne Hood's life were spent in a manner more suited to her formal training than her professional career. A wealthy socialite after her marriage to Phipps, she served as president of The Southern Club and was a prominent member of the D.A.R., Duquesne Club, 20th Century Club, Women's City Club, Zonta, and other elite Pittsburgh organizations and country clubs. In these years Hood emphasized her Southern heritage, appearing as a Dixie Belle in local shows. She died suddenly on 11 April 1958, at age 60. Her sister in Pittsburgh had died the year before; and she was survived by her brother, Israel Hood, of New York City, and by Alfred Phipps's children by an earlier marriage. She was buried in Mt. Lebanon cemetery, just south of downtown Pitts-



Adelyne Hood as a dowager. This photo appeared with her obituary in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 12 April 1958.

burgh. The obituary which appeared in the *Pittsburgh Press* stressed her local fame as Aunt Caroline as well as her prominent social position. It parenthetically mentioned that she "had made several phonograph records of Negro, Southern and hillbilly songs."<sup>13</sup>

Those recordings remain Adelyne Hood's finest moments. Though Hood came to country music through popular commercial entertainment, she belongs within the country tradition which was forged in the encounter between popular commercial material and regional folk traditions. Although Hood's background was as a faded Southern aristocrat, aspects of her career are not as distinct from other early country performers as it may first appear. The majority of the women's secular songs by the traditional-country performers the Carter Family, are Tin Pan Alley products and the group relied heavily on nineteenth-century sentimental song. Other early country performers like Jimmie Rodgers started as vaudeville entertainers. Hood's vaudeville experience put her in the midst of the most popular entertainment form in the beginning of the twentieth century. It was in vaudeville that subcultures mixed. Professional performers and rural performers more familiar with folk cultural traditions and regional material, in interaction with a mass audience, created a varied and entertaining popular culture. Country music lays claim to the vaudeville tradition, and with that claim to Adelyne Hood.

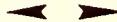
To the end of her career Adelyne Hood remained a popularizer of folk, old-time, and what we now consider country music. Her fiddling, while not in any hillbilly tradition, is light-fingered, deft, and lively enough to win a country fiddler's respect. Her marvelous, insouciant singing is at once a Southern Belle and the most common black woman. As *The Bulletin Index* noted:

Adelyne Hood early realized that the low musical Negro voice falls

pleasantly on the ear, and is an especial joy and curiosity to loud and harsh toned No'therners.<sup>14</sup>

While we may not find her croon as confusing as did many in Pittsburgh, Adelyne Hood's career violated the boundaries of social class, racial lines, and musical genres, making the history of country music at once more complicated and more rich.

--Nashville, Tennessee



#### NOTES

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2. Jim Walsh, "Vernon Dalhart," *Hobbies*, May-December, 1960. Walter Darrell Haden, "Vernon Dalhart: Commercial Country Music's First International Star," *JEMF Quarterly*, Vol. XI, Part 2 (Summer, 1975), No. 38, and Vol. XI, Part 3 (Autumn, 1975), No. 39. Robert Coltrane, "Carson Robison: First of the Rural Professionals," *Old Time Music* 29 (Summer, 1978).
3. Victor 40224 (with Dalhart); Banner 0645; Conqueror 7500; Jewel 5900; Oriole 1900; Perfect 12594; Regal 8955; Romeo 1261; Cameo 0245; Harmony 1080 (with White). (The two versions are practically identical.)
4. Quoted by Jim Walsh, "Vernon Dalhart," *Hobbies*, November, 1960, p. 44.
5. *Ibid*, p. 44.
6. Mrs. C. J. Robison, letter to the authors, 12 April 1980.
7. "Ex-Radio Singer Dies," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 12 April 1958, n.p.
8. *The Pittsburgh Press*, 5 March 1944, n.p.
9. "Newsfront," *The Bulletin Index*, 19 March 1942, n.p.
10. *Ibid*.
11. William Lawrence Slout, *Theatre in a Tent* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), p. 87.
12. Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 79.
13. "Aunt Caroline of Radio Dies in Oakland," *The Pittsburgh Press*, 11 April 1958, n.p.
14. "Newsfront," *The Bulletin Index*, 19 March 1942, n.p.

#### CALAMITY JANE

##### SPOKEN:

Sheriff: Whoa there, who are you?  
 Jane: Well, who are you?  
 Sheriff: I'm the sheriff.  
 Jane: Well, I'll tell you who I am and where I'm from.

##### SUNG:

I'm from Princeton in Missouri,  
 And I'm known from coast to coast.  
 I'm Calamity Jane, the big hurricane,  
 And I've never been known to boast.

Why tell us something about yourself. (sung by sheriff)  
 I'll tell you a thing or two.  
 It was really me that pinched the poke,  
 From Dangerous Dan Magru.

I'm Calamity Jane,  
 Calamity Jane. (sung by sheriff)  
 I've blazed the trail,  
 and rode the plain.  
 Fast on the draw,  
 don't care for the law.  
 I'm the famous Calamity Jane.

## SPOKEN:

Jane: Well, how 'bout a little game of poker, sheriff?  
 Sheriff: Alright. I'll play you one hand to show down. You deal.  
 Jane: One-Two-Three-Four-Five. Well, whatcha got?  
 Sheriff: I got four aces.  
 Jane: Say, you ain't playin' on the square sheriff. That  
 ain't the hand I dealt ya.

## SUNG:

When it comes to playin' poker,  
 I invented that there game.  
 Why I hear you won more money, (sung by sheriff)  
 Than Uncle Sam can claim. (sung by sheriff)

And I broke a thousand hearts of men,  
 And I broke up barrooms too.  
 I could make short work of a dozen dames,  
 Like the woman that's known as Lou.

(chorus)

## SPOKEN:

Sheriff: Well, how 'bout a little drink Jane.  
 Jane: Alright. Do you run this here saloon sheriff?  
 Sheriff: Yes I do.  
 Jane: Well, what da ya charge for a drink?  
 Sheriff: Seventy-five cents and a dollar a drink.  
 Jane: Oh, ya got two brands?  
 Sheriff: No, seventy-five cents if I pour it and a dollar if you pour it.  
 Jane: Well, you better pour it sheriff.  
 Sheriff: Alright.  
 Jane: Well, here's how.

## SUNG:

When it comes to drinkin' likker,  
 I can take a dozen men.  
 And drink 'em under the tables,  
 And up on their chairs again.  
 And if I haven't got a corkscrew,  
 I never give a snatch.  
 I bit off the neck of the bottle,  
 And throw 'er right down the hatch.

I'm Calamity Jane,  
 Calamity Jane. (sung by sheriff)  
 I blazed the trail,  
 and rode the plain.  
 I don't give a hang,  
 for the sheriff's whole gang.  
 I'm the famous Calamity Jane.

## SPOKEN:

Sheriff: Say, you're pretty tough ain't you?  
 Jane: Why I'm so tough I'm afraid to sleep with myself.

## SUNG:

You must a been the meanest brat, (sung by sheriff)  
 When you were just a kid. (sung by sheriff)  
 Huh, you can look right in the graveyard,  
 At some of the things I did.

When it comes right down to fightin',  
 I'm known in everyplace.  
 I can throw a spear in less than that,  
 And spit in a wildcat's face.

I'm Calamity Jane,  
 Calamity Jane. (sung by sheriff)  
 I blazed the trail  
 and rode the plain.  
 You're pretty tough, (sung by sheriff)  
 I'm tougher than tough.  
 I'm the famous Calamity Jane.

Whoopee!

## (INSERT)

I'm Calamity Jane,  
 Calamity Jane. (sung by sheriff)  
 I blazed the trail,  
 and rode the plain.  
 You can bet I can wreck,  
 any sandpaper neck.  
 I'm the famous Calamity Jane.



## THE LADY THAT'S KNOWN AS LOU

## SPOKEN:

Cowboy: Hey, bartender, can't ya set 'em up once more?  
 Lou: Pipe down over there. Pipe down over there.  
 Where is she, where is she?  
 That loud mouth that's been a-doin all the braggin around here.  
 Cowboy: Who da ya mean?  
 Lou: Here's who I mean.

## SUNG:

Who is this famous Calamity Jane,  
 This rip roarin gal from the west.  
 Why that poor forlorn couldn't do any harm,  
 That gal was only a pest.

When it comes down to bein a wildcat,  
 Why Jane was as mild as the dew.  
 It was me that they all were afraid of,  
 I'm the lady that's known as Lou.

I'm the lady that's known as Lou.  
 That lady that stuck to Magru.  
 When that guy had to broke,  
 Who took care of his poke,  
 The lady that's known as Lou.

Now I've gambled with all the gamblers,  
 Poker Alice had nothin on me.  
 And old Edward Dick well he thought he was slick,  
 I made that balook climb a tree.

Why all of those hombres were pikers,  
 And that goes for old Cattle Kate,  
 I made every one of them find a new trail,  
 When I reached for my thirty-eight.

I'm the lady that's known as Lou.  
 And me and myself are a crew.  
 I held up a stage,  
 When I wasn't of age.  
 The lady that's known as Lou.

## SPOKEN:

Sheriff: Hey, ain't you got no respect for law and order.  
 Lou: What did you say, sheriff?  
 Sheriff: I said, order. Order.  
 Lou: Alright, I'll order. I'll have some Old Crow, and make  
 it snappy and make it straight.  
 Sheriff: Water on the side?

## SUNG:

Say, I never take water from no one,  
 My guns speak for me when I talk.  
 And I pay every bill with a little lead pill,  
 I love to hear dyin men squawk.

Who said that Calam could drink likker,  
 I drink mine right out of the vat.  
 I don't bit off the neck of a bottle,  
 I open the keg with my gaff.

I'm the lady that's known as Lou,  
 Calamity drank home brew.  
 So up on your pins,  
 And be glad I ain't twins.  
 The lady that's known as Lou.

Jesse James and his kid brother Frank,  
 There were pretty good hard guys.  
 And gee I don't wanna brag, but all of the swag  
 They got they divided with me.

So why don't Calamity figure with me,  
 When it comes to these pups.  
 I can light up a match in the palm of my hand,  
 Brother, that's what I call rough.

The lady that's known as Lou,  
 When there's nothing for me to do,  
 I don't sit down and knit,  
 A crime I commit,  
 I'm the lady that's known as Lou.



## DAUGHTER OF CALAMITY JANE

## SPOKEN:

Sheriff: Hey, who's the strange gal coming in the door?  
 Cowboy: I don't know sheriff.  
 Sheriff: Do you know, Jack.  
 Jack: Naw, I dunno her.  
 Sheriff: Well, I'll find out myself.  
 Hi, Stranger.  
 Gal: Howdy.  
 Sheriff: Say, this ain't no place for a young gal like you. Whadda ya want in here?  
 Gal: Well, you can get a good drink in here can't you.  
 Sheriff: Yeah, but who are you?

## SUNG:

Ha, Ha, I'm a rip-roarin snort,  
 Of a gun-totin daughter,  
 Of old Calamity Jane.  
 I'm tougher than she,  
 And my history,  
 I will to you explain.

My mother was Calamity,  
 And her other name was Jane.  
 And she was a spittin hellcat,  
 Upon the western plain.

Now Ma she married a rustler,  
 But she shot him dead one night.  
 For he loved Poker Alice,  
 And Ma she loved to fight.

Now Ma and I was friendly,  
 Till I was almost ten.  
 But she was a jealous devil,  
 And I was fond of men.

One night there came a showdown,  
 And I beat her to the draw.  
 And I nearly done for her,  
 What she had done for Pa.

I'm a rip-roarin snort,  
 Of a gun-totin daughter,  
 Of old Calamity Jane.  
 I'm young and frisky,  
 And I love my whiskey,  
 And the he-men of the plain.

I met a chap in Mexico,  
 He was a handsome brut.  
 And for a crooked gambler,  
 He was too nice to shoot.

And so we trailed together,  
 And we took lots of dust.  
 From out of the mining gold fields,  
 And him I learned to trust.

Now one night in Navader,  
 He met a crooked dame.  
 She was a dance hall hussy,  
 Silver Lil was her name.

He stole my hoss, then the two  
 Hit the Utah trail.  
 And paid a crooked sheriff,  
 To lock me up in jail.

I'm a rip-roarin snort,  
 Of a gun-totin daughter,  
 Of old Calamity Jane.  
 I'm lookin for bail,  
 To get out of jail,  
 And I'll trust no man again.

And when from jail they freed me,  
 I let come what will.  
 I'll get that crooked gambler,  
 And that hussy Silver Lil.

So I bought myself a bronco,  
 And day and night I rode.  
 Then just outside of Denver,  
 I met them by the road.

Silver Lil she drew on me,  
And fast her gun hand reared.  
But I was a split-eye quicker,  
And our account was squared.

The gambler he was yeller,  
And I showed him who was boss.  
For I hung him there beside the road,  
Because he stole my hoss.

I'm a rip-roarin' snort,  
Of a gun-totin daughter,  
Of old Calamity Jane.  
Oh they come and go,  
But now I know,  
That I'm the queen of the plain.

Wheeeeeee.....



#### WESTWARD HO FOR RENO

Now girls it's true that really,  
A chap named Horace Greeley,  
Handed out some mighty good advice.  
Years ago it wasn't fem,  
Though he meant it for the men,  
Today it goes for women very nice.

You recall he had a plan,  
He said "Go west young man,  
On the plains you will find wealth untold."  
Now today we women go,  
To that western town Reno,  
And it takes us women now to find the gold.

Oh, Westward Ho for Reno,  
Go west young girl go west.  
Oh, Westward go, for I know,  
It's really for the best.  
When the lookoo-o-o birdie wants to stray,  
You're a cuckoo bird if you don't say,  
"I'll sue, you see, for dough-re-mi,  
Way out west."

I know just what I'm saying,  
And that's why I am staying,  
Just now a young and gay divorcee.  
Regular checks they come in true,  
When my alimony's due,  
Payday's for those with insight to foresee.

Now rainy days when love is cold,  
Are quite cheerful with the gold,  
That is panned from streams of love gone dry.  
So remember friends of mine,  
What they said in forty-nine,  
Ah, you know it's 'Westward Ho,' the battle cry.

Oh, Westward Ho for Reno,  
Go west young girl go west.  
Oh, Westward go, for I know  
There's gold thar in the west.  
Oh, dirt was money in mining days,  
Now alimony's the dirt that pays,  
Use your beano, out in Reno,  
For the rest.

Now after you have married,  
 You may wish you had tarried,  
 But too late you find out many things.  
 That a man expects of you  
 To be just so good and true,  
 He thinks it's quite alright to try his wings.

You recall a bird in hand,  
 Is worth two you cannot land,  
 Do not fail to pick them clean while you may.  
 For today we women find,  
 That it's true that love is blind,  
 So we feel there's nothing left to do but say.....

Oh, Westward Ho for Reno,  
 Go west good soul, go west.  
 Oh, Westward go, for I know,  
 What others only guess.  
 That matrimony is needed so  
 That alimony can roll the dough,  
 So let Reno, put the Cleano,  
 To the test.



#### HE'S ON THE CHAIN GANG NOW

##### SPOKEN:

Judge: Order in the court. What's your name?  
 Mandy: Mandy, your honor.  
 Judge: Mandy, what's this man been doing?  
 Mandy: Well, your honor. He's been treatin me mizable lately.  
 I didn't mind it when he stayed out all night.  
 And I didn't mind when he didn't give me none of his salary for two months.  
 But I couldn't stand it no mo when he told me he was goin' out to play poker,  
 And then I found out that da only hand he held was da hand of a tall,  
 lean, lanky mama what lives righ here next door.  
 And then he mess me all up 'n told me I didn't preciate him.  
 That's the trouble wid him your honor.  
 Judge: That's enough. Prisoner rise. Ninety days. Next case.

##### SUNG:

Last week he was free,  
 He's on da chain gang now.  
 He needs sympathy,  
 He needs it bad and how.  
  
 Once he two-timed me,  
 We had a little row.  
 I'm gonna let him be,  
 He's on da chain gang now.  
  
 I took him to da judge,  
 And da judge said state your case.  
 All I had to do,  
 Was to show da judge my face.  
  
 Da judge just looked at me,  
 And then he raised his brow.  
 Goodbye liberty,  
 He's on da chain gang now.  
  
 Judge said ninety days,  
 He's on da chain gang now.  
 Gotta change his ways,  
 Or else he gets no chow.

He told a lot of lies,  
 He messed me up and how.  
 De judge said prisoner rise,  
 He's on da chain gang now.

Never trust a man,  
 Cause he won't play on da square.  
 I'll be breakin hearts,  
 While he is breakin rocks in der.

Warden's got da key,  
 He cain't get out no how.  
 Last week he was free,  
 He's on da chain gang now.

↓  
MADAM QUEEN

SPOKEN:

Madam Queen: Der goes dat phone ring.  
 Hello. Hello, honey how is you?  
 Visitor: Don't tell him I'm here.  
 Madam Queen: No, I won't. (whispered aside)  
 Ah, listen honey. I cain't talk to ya now.  
 Violet's here.  
 Uh-huh.  
 You can call me later.  
 Well, bye.

SUNG:

Now I'm a lady that's known all over this land.  
 I'm gettin' notoriety,  
 I'm mentioned in society.  
 But maybe some of you folks don't understand,  
 Just really who I am.  
 Who I might beeeee.

Now who gets presents by the score,  
 At Christmas time and den gets more.  
 Nobody but me,  
 Madam Queen.

And who's got a big boy crazy in love,  
 And who knows who he's thinkin' of.  
 Nobody but me,  
 Madam Queen.

Now who's got her boyfriend worried,  
 About her salesman friend and others.  
 And when that salesman friend's in town,  
 Who goes to her grandmother's.

But who's the only one should know,  
 That my grandma died ten years ago.  
 Nobody but me,  
 Madam Queen.

SPOKEN:

Madam Queen: Well, I guess that's that big boy again.  
 Hello. Hello, honey.  
 No, she's gone.  
 What's that?  
 Ah, you knows I luvz you honey.  
 Uh-huh. Sure I do.  
 Listen, Hon. I sure want that fur coat.  
 You will?

When?  
For my birthday!  
Oh, you sure are sweet. I dunno what I'd do widout you.  
Oh, you want to come see me tonight.  
Well, I just wish I could let you come.  
But you see I promised my mother,  
I'd spend the evening with her,  
And you wouldn't want me to break my promise,  
Would you?  
Tomorrow night?  
Oh, I guess that'll be alright.  
Uh-huh. Well, bye.  
Huh?  
Ah, you know I duz honey. Bye.

## SUNG:

Now who got the ten cent clothes they sell,  
That never saw an oyster shell.  
Nobody but me,  
Madam Queen.

And that piana that he sent,  
With the ten keys gone, and the legs all bent,  
Nobody but me,  
Madam Queen.

Now I give banana cures all day,  
To every Harlem tourist.  
And they all admit that I am,  
Harlem's best banana curist.

But who'll go on and strut her stuff,  
Till she gets the coat to match that muff.  
Nobody but me,  
Madam Queen.

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# Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists

Conducted by JIM WALSH

## Vernon Dalhart

By JIM WALSH

[Jim Walsh's monthly column, "Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists," began in January 1942 in *Hobbies*: The Magazine for Collectors and has continued regularly almost without interruption. Although he dealt primarily with early pop music recording stars such as Billy Murray, Vess L. Ossman, and Cal Stewart, Walsh was also familiar with early hillbilly music on record, and had met or corresponded with such artists as Kelly Harrell, Henry Whitter, Carson Robison, and Vernon Dalhart. His eight-part series on Dalhart ran from May through December of 1960, and for many years was the only source of biographical information on the man who recorded country music's first hit, "The Prisoner's Song"/"The Wreck on the Old 97." Although other research has since produced additional information, Walsh's articles still stand as essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in Dalhart's musical career. Hence, we are pleased to reproduce the series in JEMFQ, with permission from *Hobbies*.]

### PART I

May, 1960

#### I. The Hotel Clerk

At 5 o'clock of the afternoon of Wednesday, September 15, 1948, a 65-year-old night clerk for the Barnum Hotel died in the Bridgeport, Conn., Hospital.

Probably few of the doctors and nurses who had attended the dead man knew that less than a quarter of a century before he had been a famous tenor who had experienced one of the most remarkable careers in American musical history. He had sung successfully in opera, both light and grand, and had been even more successful on the concert stage. He had won a deserved reputation as one of the most versatile and accomplished recorders of popular music and had made hundreds of records of sentimental ballads and comic songs.

Then, after the so-called "hillbilly" tunes came into vogue, he had been recognized as the leading exponent of that type of song. From 1925 to 1930 he probably made more records—thousands of them—than any other singer—and was almost unquestionably the biggest selling recording artist of that five-year period. His first Victor "hillbilly" was the most popular vocal record ever made up to that time and, because of its curiously complex and confusing history, caused more ill feeling and resulted in more expensive, long continued legal action than any other disc in the annals of sound recording. And the singer himself had a personality and character seemingly as complex and baffling as his most famous recorded production.

The dead man, whose legal name was Marion Try Slaughter, had made records under a bewildering variety of disguises—nobody knows precisely how many, but two score probably would be a conservative estimate. He was, however, best known to record buyers under his stage name, Vernon Dalhart.

#### II. Descent Into Obscurity

The Vernon Dalhart, who lay dead in the Bridgeport Hospital, had come a long way, accomplished much and suffered much since his birth at Jefferson, Tex., on April 6, 1883. He had been a leader of his profession for years, and had made—and lost—a fortune. After several years at the crest of popularity, his vogue had vanished as the record industry collapsed in the depression of the early 1930's, and he had descended into obscurity. Just six days before his death, I met two of his former associates at a party for pioneer recording artists in Garden City, N. Y., and asked them where Dalhart was and what he was doing. Both his former singing partner, the late Carson Robison, and Bob Miller, who wrote many of the songs Dalhart recorded, said they had no idea what had become of him.

Yet when the metropolitan press learned Vernon Dalhart had died, his passing was treated as a colorful "story" and given generous space. One newspaper published an estimate, which I think exaggerated, that he had made a million dollars from his "Prisoner's Song" recordings alone. And all the papers recalled details of the bizarre law suit touched off by the amazing success of his record of "The Wreck of the Old 97."

A fine newspaper summary of Dalhart's life and achievements—though it contains a few inaccuracies—was published by the New York Herald Tribune. I quote it, somewhat condensed:

#### III. Herald-Tribune Obituary

VERNON DALHART DIES; SINGER OF 'PRISONER SONG'. Believed First Professional Hillbilly Minstrel; Also Known for 'Floyd Collins' Bridgeport, Conn., Sept. 16.—Vernon Dalhart, 65, considered the first of the professional hillbilly singers, died at Bridgeport Hospital last night after a long illness. He introduced "The Prisoner's Song," one of the nation's all-time hits, and his records, made mostly in the late 1920's, were reputed to have sold 2,000,000 copies.

He retired in 1931, in modest circumstances, despite earnings from his songs of several hundred thousand dollars. In his last years he was a teacher of voice culture with a studio at Bridgeport.

#### Took Chariss Edison's Tip

In 1925, Vernon Dalhart was a more or less obscure tenor who had appeared in musicals including "The Girl of the Golden West" with John Charles Thomas and in vaudevilles at the old Hippodrome. He was trying without much success to invade the young record industry when Charles Edison, son of the inventor of the phonograph, suggested he put aside operatic and light operatic numbers and try a Southern song instead.

As Mr. Dalhart recalled later, he first recorded "The Wreck of the Old 97." He added "The Prisoner's Song" merely to fill the other side.

The resulting record made history. Almost immediately, "The Prisoner's Song" was being sung and wailed in speakeasies, fraternity houses and theaters all over the country. It sold 225,000 copies in four months and is still being sold. R.C.A.'s Victor first of a dozen companies for whom Mr. Dalhart recorded, estimated total sales at two or three million records, and Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., which holds the copyright, said sheet music sales totaled more than 3,000,000. Its royalties probably have totaled \$100,000.

Its origin is lost in a confusion of stories, several versions contributed by Mr. Dalhart himself. Sometimes he claimed authorship. More often he credited the song to his cousin, Guy Massey, a wandering singer with a tragic life who died at 27, just as his song was becoming famous.

#### Death of Floyd Collins'

Mr. Massey's name is listed as author on the published version. Both the tune and the theme, however, appear in the folk music of Tennessee and Kentucky and in old cowboy and prison songs. A common assumption of authorities is that Mr. Massey picked these up in his travels and combined them in a song which Mr. Dalhart edited into its final version.

After "The Prisoner's Song" Mr. Dalhart was kept busy by record companies. Until 1929 he worked with Carson Robison of Pleasant Valley, N. Y., who wrote some of the many songs they recorded. Among their best sellers were "My Blue Ridge Mountain Home," "The Bird on Nellie's Hat," "Little Green Valley" and "The Death of Floyd Collins," the latter a topical lament of the young who died trapped in a Kentucky cave.

Mr. Dalhart was born Marion Try Slaughter on a ranch near Texarkana, Tex. He studied voice at the Dallas

Conservatory of Music and moved to New York on recommendation of his teacher. It was there he assumed his professional name, taken from two Texas towns of Vernon and Dalhart. Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Sally Lee Slaughter, and a daughter, Mrs. Lewis A. Shea of Westport, Conn.

#### IV. Some Changes and Corrections

Although the Herald-Tribune obituary notice was excellent, a re-reading has brought a few errors to my attention.

The speculation that Dalhart's records sold 2,000,000 copies is a ludicrous under-estimate, if it is intended to refer to all the records he made for all companies. Even if it applied only to his best selling disc, the Victor which combined "The Wreck of the Old 97" and "The Prisoner's Song," it would still be too low.

There is no way of knowing how many millions of Dalhart records were sold, but even before he scored his sensational success with Victor's No. 19427 he was singing as a free-lance for most American companies. After he turned out the biggest selling vocal "platter" that had ever been made, he worked, without exception, for all record companies in the Eastern United States. In the late 1920's his voice could be heard (even though the label may not have called him Vernon Dalhart) on records with the widest possible range of prices. He was on the cheapest discs, such as Grey Gull, Radiex and Madison (the latter were sometimes sold by ten cent stores for a dime apiece), and the three-for-a-dollar type which included Perfect, Cameo, Banner and Domino. His Edison Blue Amberol cylinders cost 35 cents. He was on Columbia's 50 cent Harmony and Velvet Tone labels; and on the standard 75 cent brands, among them Victor, Columbia, Brunswick and Okeh. His Edison Diamond Discs cost \$1 and \$1.50. (All his Edison hillbillies were a dollar.) The amount of work he must have done during his most productive five-year span staggers the imagination. Sometimes a tired sound crept into his voice, as on his Columbia record of "The Bum Song."

The Herald Tribune says Dalhart was a voice instructor during his last years. My statement that he was a hotel night clerk is taken from the death certificate issued by the Connecticut State Department of Health, containing information given by his son-in-law. It is of course likely that Dalhart taught singing before changing to the hotel job or that he combined the two.

The certificate also says he lived in apartment 1 at 2825 Fairfield

Avenue, Bridgeport. His father was Robert Slaughter and his mother's maiden name was Mary Jane Castlebury. Both were born in Jefferson, Tex. (There is some uncertainty as to whether Dalhart was born in the town or on a ranch nearby.) Dr. Benjamin Horn certified he had attended Dalhart from January 14 to September 15, 1948. The funeral directors were Mullins & Redgate and the burial was in Mt. Grove cemetery, Bridgeport. Cause of death was given as coronary occlusion. His wife died October 26, 1950, aged 65, in Westport, Conn.

Dalhart began his "second career" as a singer of hillbilly ditties in 1924, not 1925. He was not "a more or less obscure tenor," but one of the best known singers in the phonograph field. He was not trying to "invade the young record industry" (the phonograph in 1924 was 47 years old), but had already begun a successful recording career in 1916. Although he was not quite so popular as Victor's exclusive stars Billy Murray, Henry Burr and Aileen Stanley, and did not make quite as many records as such outstandingly successful free-lancers as Billy Jones and Ernest Hare, Irving and Jack Kaufman, Charles Harrison, Arthur Fields and Charles Hart and Elliott Shaw, he was still a prolific and highly regarded performer. It may be true that Charles Edison suggested that he try making Southern-style records, but the late Arthur Walsh, who afterwards became a Senator from New Jersey, headed Edison's artist and repertoire department in 1924. Dalhart's first record of "The Wreck of the Old 97," did not, as will be shown later, have "The Prisoner's Song" on the reverse side. The royalties from records and sheet music of "The Wreck" have been far more than \$10,000.

If Dalhart and Carson Robison made a record of the 1904 comic song, "The Bird on Nellie's Hat," I have never seen it or come across it in a record catalog. It certainly was not one of their most popular numbers. Dalhart recorded "The Death of Floyd Collins" as a solo rather than a duet with Robison, although the latter probably played the guitar accompaniment in the various versions. "Little Green Valley" was one of Robison's compositions which he recorded chiefly in association with Frank Luther after he had ended his partnership with Dalhart.

Dalhart did not appear in vaudeville at the Hippodrome, but in a Gilbert and Sullivan production during 1913-14, and, according to this entry in a 1929 issue of the Columbia booklet, "Familiar Tunes, Old and New," he was by no means "obscure" after his engagement there:

This famous Southern tenor is known both South and North, and his long list of records proves his great popularity. Vernon Dalhart, who comes from Texas, was nothing short of a sensation when he made his New York debut at its famous Hippodrome. Dalhart was one of the first to carry Southern tunes North, and now devotes his whole time to them. If you don't know him yet, either via the air or

Columbia New Process records, ask your dealer to play for you one of his records.

A 1926 edition of the same booklet contains a slightly different writeup:

Here's a Southern tenor who is claimed by the South and the North alike. Vernon Dalhart was born in Texas. Early in his career he came to New York to perfect his singing art. The measure of Dalhart's success is recorded in Columbia records, which sell by the thousands. . . . Dalhart has organized a musical group called "Dalhart's Texas Panhandlers." The popularity of this organization promises to be second only to that of its leader.

The April, 1958, HOBBIES contained a brief description of Dalhart's home town which I cannot resist quoting:

Jefferson is Texas' first river steamboat metropolis and for years (was) its second commercial city.

The city was laid out in 1842. Sawmills in the surrounding wilderness of tall cypress and pine trees turned out

him singing and advised him to study. He took the advice lightly, but when other voice culture experts said the same thing, he gave it serious consideration and finally saved enough money to go to New York. There he worked as an assistant shipping clerk in a big piano house from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and studied after working hours. His first engagement was a small part in "The Girl of the Golden West." He was next engaged as leading tenor for the Hippodrome production of "Pinafore," and when re-engaged for the big road production of the same show. It was following his appearance in "Pinafore" that he became an Edison artist.

In a recent interview when asked what class of music he most enjoyed singing, Mr. Dalhart said:

"My ambition in life is to sing always the songs that please the great masses of the people, to bring into the many dark corners of life just a little more sunshine and happiness. I was educated for grand opera, but really feel that I can bring more happiness to the many with the singing of what we popularly call the heart-songs, the ballad type, with their little strains of love—love of family, home, country and dear ones."

"There should be music in all our lives. It would take away much of the grimness and sorrow, and to those of

## PART II

June, 1960

### I. Columbia Recordings

When the young Texas tenor, Marion Try Slaughter, selected his stage name he combined it from two towns near which he had grown up—Vermon and Dalhart. But he seems not to have made it clear how Dalhart should be pronounced. Nearly all record collectors say it to rhyme with "pal heart," but a 1927 Brunswick catalog gave it a broad A sound and indicated it should be called "doll heart."

Pronunciation aside, the first mention I have found of Vernon Dalhart as a recording artist is in the June, 1915, catalog of Edison Diamond Discs. Near the end of a list of "Artists Who Have Made or Will Make Edison Records" occurs the entry: "VERNON DALHART, Tenor. American tenor of experience in Grand Opera and Operetta."

That entry notwithstanding, no Dalhart records are listed in the catalog and another two years went by before his name appeared in an Edison publication. It is possible that the tenor had done some recording for Edison, but Mr. Edison had rejected the trials.

Dalhart's first record for any important company may have been Columbia 2108, "Just a Word of Sympathy," which appeared in the December, 1916, supplement. It was mated with "I Know That I Got More Than My Share," sung by another promising tenor, "Robert Lewis" (Lewis James). The description was brief: "Vernon Dalhart, a former member of the Century Opera Company makes his initial bow with Robert Lewis, a singer from the West of decided merit." Dalhart's song is attractively sung, but the record was not a good seller and was cut out when the 1919 catalog appeared.

The tenor had it hard to establish himself with Columbia. He was not heard from again on the "Note the Notes" label until August, 1918, when he sang a World War I song, "Paul Revere (Won't You Ride For Us Again?") coupled with a Peerless Quartet offering of perhaps one of the least attractive sounding titles on record, "France, We'll Rebuild Your Towns For You." The war ended a few months later and this record went into oblivion.

Vernon Dalhart's name disappeared from the Columbia catalog in 1920, but reappeared in January, 1922, when he sang one of the "mammy" songs which were then ravaging the country. It was "Weep No More, My Mammy," and was doubled with Al Jolson singing his great hit, "April Showers."

In February, Dalhart was back in a duet with Al Bernard, the brilliant blackface comedian, with whom he had struck up a brief partnership. They sang "I Want My Mammy," and the supplement writer said: "Dalhart and Bernard bring out, with a depth of feeling and a wealth of harmony, the words of this melodious piece." On the reverse, Edwin Dale, who was really Charles Hackett, stepped down from his Metropolitan Opera environment to sing "That's How I Believe In You."

Dalhart returned in May with "Pick Me Up And Lay Me Down In Dear Old Dixieland," with Charles Hart and Elliott Shaw occupying the

### Edison Amberola Monthly July 1921



LEFT TO RIGHT

Vernon Dalhart's photo appeared on the cover of the Edison Amberola Monthly for July, 1921, three years before he became the leading singer of "hillbilly" numbers. As these pictures show, Vernon Dalhart strongly believed in athletic exercise for singers.

TOP  
Dalhart with a scrapbook of clippings about his starring in "Pinocchio."

durable lumber for the stately homes that rose quickly. The Big Cypress Bayou was deep enough to accommodate steamboats from New Orleans and intervening points. They brought settlers from the East and glamorous goods for Jefferson and points further West. Long wagon trains bore them, after depositing their loads of buffalo hides and tongues.

The town boasted artificial gas street lights as early as 1857. When the railroads that had been refused rights-of-way by this thriving steamboat center won out with their low rates, Jefferson lost population, but it kept its old Southern glamour and charm.

Dalhart's photo appeared on the cover of the July, 1921, Edison Amberola Monthly, three years before the idea of becoming a hillbilly specialist occurred to him. He had been for several years one of the leading Edison artists and the magazine contained an interview which may conclude this installment. Next month his recording career will be traced from its beginning:

Vernon Dalhart was born in Jefferson, Texas, one of the oldest towns in the "Lone Star State." At the age of 16 he moved to Dallas, Texas, where he went to work in a hardware store. His happy disposition kept him constantly singing at his work. One day a French-Canadian vocal teacher heard

us who have been gifted with that greatest of all gifts, the singing voice, comes the great duty of giving what joy our voices may bring to those less fortunate."

Although a hard worker and industrious student, Mr. Dalhart has always found time for physical training; in fact, he believes it is a necessary part of the singer's life. When questioned on this subject, Mr. Dalhart replied:

"Many a young and promising musician, in his climb toward success, forgets to cultivate one of the factors most essential to the winning of the greatest possible success. That factor is health."

"I believe in a regular system of physical training for the concert singer. I have a daily schedule which includes a certain number of hours devoted to boxing, handball, swimming, and gymnasium exercise, and it all helps me as a singer. There is much demand on the body in the life of a professional singer. His body must be ready to meet those demands or he will not accomplish what he might otherwise do. Many a promising singer has developed only failure, because of his lack of proper exercise. I have always been a strong advocate of physical exercises for the young singer."

As this article shows, Dalhart was not recording operatic arias at the time he abruptly changed the course of his professional career. He was singing mostly ballads with a sprinkling of comic songs.

other side in one of the interminable crop of "mammy" songs, "Weep No More, My Mammy." A little later he sang "Hawaiian Rainbow," coupled with Frank Crumit's version of "Waikiki, I Hear You Calling Me." And there, for the time being, Dalhart's Columbia career again came to a halt. He was not heard from again as a Columbia singer until 1924.

## II. Emerson Discs

Emerson seems to have been the first record company to use Dalhart's services consistently. Victor Emerson had quit his job at Columbia's recording expert in 1916 to start his own company, and Dalhart's records began to appear before Emerson had been in business a year, producing the poor quality 7-inch double-faced records that sold for a quarter and supposedly could be played equally well in either lateral or vertical position.

An Emerson catalog issued early in 1917 listed seven discs on which Dalhart occupied one or both sides and more may have been published later. Most had special accompaniments arranged by the Emerson mu-

ciations rather than monetary worth. Records of this type were sold in too large quantities to bring big prices today. Those by Dalhart, as well as other performers of his period, are mostly worth about 50 cents each in good condition.

## III. Debut With Edison

Vernon Dalhart began achieving status as an important recording artist when his first Edison records appeared, some two years after his name had been published in the 1915 Diamond Disc catalog. His progress was as rapid with Edison as it had been slow with Columbia.

The following appeared in *Edison Diamond Points* for June, 1917:

Vernon Dalhart is an American tenor who will soon make his Edison debut. His first stage experience was acquired in "The Girl of the Golden West." He also sang a leading role in the revival of "Pinafore" at the New York Hippodrome in 1913 and 1914.

(Referring to Dalhart's appearance in Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West" opera, the late Fred Rabenstein, who was associated with the Edison company for many years, told me he understood the tenor lost his job because of a ludicrous happening on stage. In one scene a character was supposed to pick up a bowl and drink feverishly from it. Fred said he was told that one night a practical joker coated the inside of the bowl with limburger cheese. He wasn't sure whether Dalhart was accused of applying the coating or whether it was he who picked up the bowl and objected to the fragrance. At any rate there was a fight in view of the audience between the joker and the drinker, and both men were fired. At least, so the legend goes. The whole thing very likely never happened, but I mention it because of the story's amusing nature.)

Dalhart's first Edison record, and probably the best record he ever made, appeared as a Blue Amberol cylinder in the list for June, 1917. It was No. 3185, "Can't Yo' Heah Me Callin', Caroline?" and it was a mas-

terpiece of interpretative dialect singing from the first note to the last. "Caroline" has been recorded by many other singers, including those of such diverse talents as George MacFarlane, Frank Coombs, Al Bernard, and Reinold Werrenrath, but none of them came close to Dalhart. Although Dalhart sings it in Negro dialect there is no trace of the minstrel show type of burlesque intonation. The whole thing rings as true as if a thoroughbred Negro tenor were being heard. A striking feature of Dalhart's singing was the depth of expression, intense feeling and apparent sincerity that he could put into type of song from a hill-billy ballad to an operatic aria. In this respect, I think, he was unequalled by any other popular artist.

The Diamond Disc version of this wonderful piece of character singing came out in August, 1917, and was so successful it became one of the 300 most popular Edison records. The description said:

You must realize, even when you have only heard "Can't Yo' Heah Me Callin', Caroline?" once that this is quite different from the usual "coon song." It is a really artistic, old-fashioned darky love song. Vernon Dalhart sings it with tremendous effect. He gets the real darky whine. This is probably the best rendition of this kind ever recorded.

"Caroline" was paired with a beautiful rendition of "Indiana" by the three ladies who then comprised the Homestead Trio—Gladys Rice, Betsy Lane Shepherd, and Amy Ellerman.

Dalhart's peculiar ability to sing naturally in Negro dialect was mentioned in the *Edison Amberola Monthly* for December, 1918:

Amberola owners all know Vernon Dalhart's proficiency in singing Negro melodies. He was recently asked how he ever learned such perfection in Negro dialect.

"Learn it?" he said. "I never had to learn it. When you are born and brought up in the South your only trouble is to talk any other way. All through my childhood that was almost the only talk I ever heard because you know the sure 'nough Southerner talks almost like a Negro.



VERNON DALHART,  
as he appeared as a concert singer

even when he's white. I've broken myself of the habit, more or less, in ordinary conversation, but it still comes pretty easy."

Dalhart's mastery of dialect also was referred to in the biographical sketch of him published in the yearly Victor catalogs from 1920 through 1923:

One of the best light opera tenors in America is Vernon Dalhart, an American, who has made a career for himself in the characteristic American way. He was born in Jefferson, Texas, one of the oldest towns in the "Lone Star State," and one of his earliest experiences was that of a "cow puncher." Since 1912 he has been on the stage, part of the time with the Century Theatre Company of New York. There is no burlesquing in Mr. Dalhart's singing of Negro songs. To quote his own words, he simply imagines he's "back home" again and sings as the spirit and his home experiences dictate.

## IV. An Edison Favorite

Dalhart's second Edison appearance was in October, 1917, on a Blue Amberol cylinder. He and Gladys Rice sang "Ain't You Comin' Back To Dixieland?" thus giving Miss Rice, then a girl hardly out of her teens, the distinction of being the first singer with whom Dalhart recorded duets. For some reason the record did not appear as a Diamond Disc.

The tenor's Edison popularity grew steadily and his appearances on both discs and cylinders were regular. The October *Diamond Points* said:

Vernon Dalhart is rapidly becoming an Edison favorite. His "The Sunshine of Your Smile" will gladden your musical longings. Not in a long time have we heard a more appealing voice than Dalhart's. You may expect frequent Re-Creation of his voice.

The November issue revealed that Dalhart could be engaged to sing in Edison "tone tests" and advised dealers to write for information to a gentleman with the delightfully improbable name of Verdi E. B. Fuller, who had charge of assigning artists to sing in direct comparison with the Edison disc instrument.

Dalhart soon went on a tone testing tour, in which he was assisted by a gifted young lady violinist from Alabama, Miss Adelyne Hood, of whom more will be heard later. On one occasion he gave a tone test



In this 1923 photograph Dalhart is pretending to be annoyed with his accompanist, who hasn't been identified. Could she be Dalhart's wife or daughter?

sical director, Arthur Bergh. These usually consisted of violin, 'cello, and piano, but sometimes two violins were brought into play. In numerical order, the Emerson Dalhart records were:

No. 798, "The World Is Hungry for a Little Bit of Love," coupled with "My Hawaiian Sunshine," sung by Gus Van and Joe Schenk; 7104, "Can't Yo' Heah Me Callin', Caroline?" doubled with "Mother Machree," by Henry Pinckney; 1727, "I Know I Got More Than My Share" (coupling, "It's Not Your Nationality," by William Scherer); 7132, "When Shadows Fall" and "Sometime," both by Dalhart; 7174, "Lil' Gal" and "Deep River," the latter adapted and arranged by Bergh; 7183, "Off From Rio," combined with "Off to Philadelphia," baritons solo by the veteran John W. Myers; and 7192, "Till the Clouds Roll By" and "You Sang Something," two musical comedy hits written by P. G. Wodehouse and Jerome Kern.

These little Emerson records aren't easy to find nowadays, but if you have some don't spring to the conclusion that they are worth a lot of money. And please don't send me lists of records you want to sell by Dalhart or other artists. I don't have time to read, reply to, and return unsolicited record lists. As I have said many times, the average old "popular" record is of interest because of its musical value or historical asso-

in a little town in South Carolina when the temperature was breaking all local heat records, but in spite of this practically the whole town turned out to hear him. Just a few months before, *Diamond Points* reported the Criterion Male Quartet had given a similar test in a Minnesota town with the temperature 15 degrees below zero.

Apparently Dalhart had difficulty in singing on exactly the same volume level as the phonograph. A dealer in a Western town invited high school boys and girls to come to a tone test and set down their impressions. One keen-eared girl wrote: "The New Edison sang as well as Mr. Dalhart, but not as loud." Miss Hood displayed the fidelity of Edison violin tone by playing in comparison with records made by other performers.

#### V. Ada Jones' Little Girl

An interesting Edison disc in which Dalhart took part was made January 25, 1918. It was an elaborate version of "The Golden Wedding," a vaudeville sketch which had been a great favorite as recorded by Ada Jones and Len Spence on Edison cylinders and for various companies before Spence's death in December, 1914. When the Edison disc was issued the company said it had received more than enough letters to fill a hushel basket asking that "The Golden Wedding" be added to the Diamond Disc catalog.

The leading parts of the old couple who had been married 50 years were played by Miss Jones (in private life Mrs. Hughie Flaherty) and Steve Porter, who took Spence's old role. Other members of the cast included Marion Evelyn Cox and Dalhart. But the most interesting performer to me was Ada Jones' daughter, Sheila, then just a few days past 12 years of age. Sheila, who was not destined to a long life, was paid \$5 for saying a few words to "Grandma"—actually her mother. As far as I know this is the only record on which her voice can be heard. It was hard to make and when it was over Sheila decided—in the words of that dedicated Ada Jones specialist, Milford Farno—that "singing and recording were not for her."

I find the following item from *Along Broadway* of December 1918, to be of interest:

The Slack Record Drive in New York owes a great deal of its success to the enthusiastic support of the Edison artists who sang repeatedly on the Pabst Laboratory steps during the entire week of the drive. They sang within a large oak replica of a Chipendale Model Edison, and bystanders were heard to remark "What a wonderful imitation"—and then to retire in confusion when the singer emerged in person instead of in black. Marie de Kyzer, who sang several times herself, brought her husband, Mr. Donald Ross Cummings, with her one afternoon. Mr. Cummings is so tall he said he'd feel uncomfortable inside the phonograph, which was about seven feet high. But he consented to sing on the outside, with Miss de Kyzer as his accompanist.

Vernon Dalhart, too, not only sang, but provided another singer. This time it was a cousin a cossack in the Navy—whose uniform and d-lightful singing of "Caroline" quite captured the audience. . . .

I have an idea the cousin in uniform was the ill-fated Guy Massey, whose name is destined to appear often in succeeding installments of this series, when the controversy over who composed Dalhart's greatest hit, "The Prisoner Song," is related.

Mention of the late Marie de Kyzer (she changed her name from Kaiser in 1917) reminds me that one



**THE HAPPIEST HOURS OF LIFE ARE THOSE SPENT IN THE HOME, IN EASY ENJOYMENT OF PLEASING MELODIES. NO NEED TO GO TO PLACES OF AMUSEMENT WHEN HOME IS MADE BRIGHT AND ATTRACTIVE BY**

#### THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH

**LET THE DEALER PLAY ONE FOR YOU.**

Price \$10.00

Old display advertising for the Edison Phonograph. Walsh collection.

of Dalhart's early Edison assignments was to help re-record the duet, "On Yonder Rock Reclining," from Auber's "Fra Diavolo," which the soprano had originally made with a sweet-voiced New York tenor, Royal Fish. Both Miss Kaiser and Dalhart did a superb job with this captivating melody. It was paired with an ensemble rendition of the Soldier's Chorus from "Faust."

Running down the list of records Dalhart made during his first five years or so with Edison I find many attractive titles. One, a popular song, "My Baby's Arms," which he sang in 1919, impresses me because it recalls the time, many years later, when my brother, Chad, now head of the English department at Beloit College but then a high school student, decided to find out which popular recording artists were most nearly free from tell-tale regional accents. He was unable to detect even one quirk in Dalhart's singing of "My Baby's Arms" that would indicate any sectional origin. It was completely without accent—a feat the more amazing in view of the natural way in which Dalhart sang in Negro dialect and was later to seem the embodiment of the Southern mountaineer. I have no doubt that Vernon Dalhart was one of the most versatile singers who ever lived. His enunciation and pronunciation were usually irreproachable, but in his Edison record of "Joan of Arc" he makes the curious mistake of pronouncing "legions" as "legends."

#### VI. More Fine Edison Records

In 1919 Dalhart made a fair Edison record of the big comic song hit, "The Alcoholic Blues," but this was the sort of thing Billy Murray sang much better for Victor and Columbia. Going back to 1917, his rendition of "There's Egypt In Your

Dreamy Eyes" is charming. The beautiful melody by Herbert Spencer had surprisingly literate words, with genuine poetic feeling, written by Spencer's wife, Fleta Jan Brown. Recollections of the tenor's light opera days came when he recorded the Nightingale's Song from "Pinafore" and made a duet with Miss Rice of "We Strongly Now Will Try Together" from "La Fille de Madame Angot." "The World Is Hungry for a Little Bit of Love," which he had also made for Emerson, likewise is of light opera type.

Another Dalhart Diamond Disc of exceptional interest is 80482, on which he combines two songs, "Night, My Love And I," and the old spiritual, "Nobody Knows The Trouble I See." In semi-sacred vein, he recorded Stephen Adams' "Star of Bethlehem."

Turning to the "straight" popular songs, his 1917 version of "I'm All Bound Round With the Mason-Dixon Line" did well, and his 1919 singing of "Carolina Sunshine," with the help

of a mixed chorus, is exquisite. He recorded "Rock-a-bye Your Baby With a Dixie Melody" for both Edison and Victor and won the Edison supplement writer's praise for sing-ing it in his own way and not imitating the mannerisms of Al Jolson, whose stage renditions had made the song a hit. He was praised, too, for the fervor with which he sang "Sweet Emalina, My Gal." His record of a pretty English ballad, "That Dreamy, Dreamy Lullaby" had a striking accompaniment by the Alessios-De Filippis Mandolin Orchestra. He sang a duet of "The Missouri Waltz" with Miss Cox, "Till We Meet Again" with Miss Rice, and his interpretation of "Molly on a Trolley" has a soprano obligato by Miss Shepherd. He and Miss Rice were also called on to make a Diamond Disc of the Indian song, "Silver Bell," which had been so popular when Ada Jones and Billy Murray sang it on an Amber cylinder in 1910.

Dalhart and Al Bernard, whose Columbia duet record has already been mentioned, gave a splendid rendition, in 1921, of a comic "coon song," "I've Got My Habits On." And he and Miss Rice helped to make phonograph history of a sort when Edison first decided to issue a special series of records to be known as "Flashes From Broadway." These were records manufactured as rapidly as possible and placed on the market in advance of a regular release date to meet the complaints of dealers that the Diamond Discs, because of the painstaking methods used in turning them out, were too slow in appearing with the current popular hits.

The first of the "Flashes from Broadway" was No. 50818, which had on one side "Sunnyside Sal," sung by Rice and Dalhart, and on the other "Melon Time In Dixieland," by the Premier Quartet—otherwise the Harmonizers. Today in the Edison laboratory a copy of this record, with the Rice-Dalhart side facing the viewer is still on display. It is framed and hangs on one of the bookshelves in Thomas A. Edison's library, about ten feet from the inventor's roll-top desk. The inscription printed beneath the record is as follows:

"First 'Flashes from Broadway.' Recorded 2:30 p.m., June 2, 1921. First prints 1:30 p.m., June 5, 1921. On sale in Chicago, June 7, 1921. Airplane—New York to Cleveland—plane, Cleveland to Chicago. On sale San Francisco, June 9, 1921.

Plane New York to Cleveland. Train—Cleveland to Omaha. Plane —Omaha to Frisco."

Unfortunately, in spite of all this rapid motion, neither side of the record was anything even approaching a hit, and the "Re-Creation" over which so much aviation energy was expended was never more than a poor seller.

Dalhart acquired one of the first of his many assumed recording names on July 23, 1923, when he made an Edison record of a comic song, "Stingo Stungo" (an obvious imitation of that great comedy classic, "Oh By Jingo!"), under the alias of Robert White. An inter-office note from W. A. H. Cronkhite to another Edison official said:

"Mr. Folsom—This song was sung by Vernon Dalhart under the name of Robert White. He prefers to sing songs of this kind under another name. If he can be worked into this line satisfactorily it will relieve the too frequent use of Billy Jones."

The tenor made three more comedy records under the disguise of Robert White—"Oh Sister, Ain't That Hot?" "Hard Hearted Hannah" and "Circus Days," the latter a revival of the 1912 hit better known as "Oh, You Circus Day." Looming just ahead of him was his emergence as a singer of hill-billy tunes when he would use an almost innumerable number of assumed names and so completely change his singing style as to make some listeners wonder whether one man could be so versatile or there were really two Vernon Dalharts.

#### PART III

July, 1960

#### I. Some Additions and Corrections

When I received Vernon Dalhart's Columbia records, I forgot that he sang one under the name of Bob White—a forerunner of the disguise of Robert White, which he adopted five years later in singing comic songs for Edison.

The overlooked Columbia, No. A2541, was issued in July, 1918. It coupled "White's" rendition of "When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band to France" with Arthur Fields singing "When It Comes to a Lovingless Day." This record was listed only in the 1919 catalog.

In February, when I mentioned Geoffrey O'Hara's Victors, I missed No. 18053, issued in July, 1916. It combined O'Hara singing "Where the Shamrock Grows" with a soprano version of "My Grandfather's Girl" by Jane Kenyon, whoever she was.

I'd also like to correct some recent typographical errors. In April the name of the tenor, Harry Macdonough, came out as Mary Macdonough! Henry Burr's recording career was said to have extended from 1922 to 1929 when it should have been 1902 to 1929. And the title of one of George Wilton Ballard's Edison recordings was given as "When You're Sure I Won't Forget" instead of "When You're Gone—." In May, one of Dalhart's most famous discs, "The Wreck of the Old 97," appears as "The Wreck of the Old 98."

Last December I mentioned that Capt. Frank Cunningham, of Richmond, Va., expressed his intention, some 70 years ago, of making cylinder records to be played at his funeral, and said I wondered whether he did. I have since had a letter (from Mrs. O. J. Mallory, of Farmville, Va., who attended the Captain's funeral) in which my question is answered. Here is part of Mrs. Mallory's communication:

"Both my mother-in-law and I were at Mr. Cunningham's funeral, and he did not sing, as his wife would not allow it to be done. She said she couldn't stand it. It was a very large crowd there. The church could not hold them. They wanted to hear him sing. He was a particular friend of my husband's and a member of the same Masonic Lodge, Meridian Lodge No. 284. He was the past master. . . My husband was a pallbearer. I pass Mr. Cunningham's grave every time I go to my husband's grave in Hollywood (cemetery). On his monument is 'Richmond's Sweet Singer.' The hymn he wanted to sing was 'The Ninety and Nine.' I have heard him sing it many times. He had a very, very sweet voice and was loved by all.

"I am nearly 77 years old, but can remember the day he was buried well. He was very much missed when he passed away, as he was a friend to everyone."

## II. Dalhart Records for Victor

Late in 1918, when he was 35, Vernon Dalhart achieved the ambition of nearly every recording artist of those days by being engaged by Victor, whose disc sales exceeded all other companies! His first Victor, No. 18512, appeared in February, 1919, doubled with the Sterling Trio singing "The Pickaninny's Paradise."

The supplement description said: "Vernon Dalhart is a new Victor artist and has a fine medium in which to introduce himself in 'Rock-a-bye Your Baby With a Dixie Melody.' . . . It is a darky song of a 'rolling stone' who has gone back to his mammy to be put to bed in the old style.

This song has made a big hit at the Winter Garden show, 'Sinbad.' The supplement contained an excellent photo of Dalhart posed behind a stand bearing the sheet music of the song.

Dalhart was back in March with No. 18525, on which he sang "I'm Waiting for You, 'Liza Jane." Again he had the Sterling Trio for "plattemates." They sang "Mummy Mine."

The supplement writer said: "I'm Waiting for You, 'Liza Jane' is a darky serenade that is the real thing. It has a rhythmic swing, and the words will carry you back to the 'Land of Cotton,' nor will you miss the whistle of the Mississippi steamboat."

This was a promising start, but almost a year went by before Victor marketed another Dalhart record. In February, 1920, on No. 18635, he sang "Bye-Lo," with John Steel occupying the B side with "While Others are Building Castles in the Air."

"Bye-Lo" was composed by Ray Perkins, who for many years has been one of the country's most successful disc jockeys from a station in Denver, Colo. It was Dalhart's only Victor record in 1920.

The tenor's next Victor appearance was in September, 1921, when, on No. 18782, he sang "Emaline." On the other side Henry Burr obliged with one of his typically melodious ballads, "You Made Me Forget How To Cry."

Dalhart's biggest selling Victor, up to that time, came out in November, 1921, when, on No. 18807, and with the assistance of the Criterion Trio (probably three members of the Criterion Quartet), he sang one of the year's biggest hits, "Tuck Me to Sleep in My Old 'Tucky Home.'" Charles Hart and Elliott Shaw harmonized "Plantation Lullaby" on the reverse.

The next year brought an epidemic of "Mammy" songs touched off by Walter Donaldson's great hit, "My Mammy," and Dalhart did as much as any other singer to keep the torrent of "mammy" songs at full strength.

In May, 1922, on No. 18875, he sang "Don't Leave Me, Mammy." Turning the record over revealed a lovely Ernest R. Ball ballad, "Time After Time," characteristically sung by Henry Burr.

The catalog editor said of Dalhart's contribution: "Out of the hundreds of 'mammy' songs now pouring from the cities, 50 years after the virtual disappearance of the good, old black 'mammy' from inland American life, this is one of the most popular, and deservedly so, for it is one of the best." It was also Dalhart's only Victor record of 1922. The "Texas tenor" obviously had not established himself with Victor audiences as he had with Edison, for there were no more Victor records by him until the weekly issue for November 16, 1923, when he occupied one side of No. 19168, singing "Mammy's Little Silver Lining."

The B side was taken up with the Peerless Quartet's richly harmonized version of "Memories of Virginia." The supplement included an amusing photo of Dalhart rolling his eyes upward and pretending to tear his hair because of some crime committed by his accompanist (perhaps his wife or daughter), a lady with long hair down her back.

In the December 14, 1923 supplement, The Virginians, directed by Ross Gorman, played a fox-trot, "Stavin' Change," composed by Dalhart's friend, Al Bernard, and Dalhart sang the refrain. A little earlier, in the October 26 list, he had sung the refrain of a fox-trot version of an Irving Berlin song, "Tell All the Folks in Kentucky," played by Charles Dornberger's Orchestra.

Possibly there were a few other Victor dance records in which he was heard. The supplements did not always list the names of "song pluggers."

No more Victor solo records by Dalhart appeared until the history-making No. 19427 appeared in November, 1924. But before the amazing career of that disc (perhaps the most controversial record ever published) can be considered, it will be necessary to provide some background.

## III. Miscellaneous Records

During the years when he was singing regularly for Edison and intermittently for Victor and Columbia, Dalhart was also working for other companies. The 1923 Gennett catalog contains three of his characteristic titles, "Carolina Sunshine," "Dear Old Southland," and "Till We Meet Again."

By 1924 he was recording duets for Okeh, Edison, and other companies with Ed Smalle, who on Victor records sang only with Billy Murray, but needed a partner when he

offered his clever duet arrangements to competing firms. Their Edison titles included "Mrs. Murphy's Chowder" and "Where Have Those Old-Timers Gone?"

In June, 1924, they appeared in the Okeh supplement with "Back in Hackensack, New Jersey," which had an ukelele accompaniment by Harry Reser. Dalhart and Smalle made a couple of numbers for Edison as the Arkansas Trio (the third member of the trio was banjoist John Cali) and the same ensemble was known on Gennett as the Windy City Duo.

Dalhart appeared on National Music Lovers records as Joseph Elliott, David Harris, and Harry Harris. He sang vocal refrains in the Columbia record coupling "Honeymoon Chimes" and "One Little Smile" by the Hawaiian guitar players, Frank Fera and Anthony Franchini.

He also sang in Edison Diamond Disc No. 51144 of "One Little Smile," by the Waikiki Hawaiian Orchestra. Presumably he also played the incidental mouth-harp solo. It probably was his first appearance on records as a mouth-harp virtuoso.

His skilfully performing these widely differing assignments points up what I have said about Dalhart's extreme versatility, which, to anticipate a bit, caused a writer in the December, 1925 issue of *The Gramophone*, published in London, to speculate on the possibility of there being two singers with the same name:

"Another queer American record is Brunswick 2911 wherein one Vernon Dalhart, a tenor, sings 'The Runaway Train' and 'Chain Gang Song' to an accompaniment of guitar and chromonica—a sort of accordion. People who specialize in out-of-the-way records should secure this, but it is not one that I dare recommend generally with confidence.

"Are there two Vernon Dalharts, as there are two Winston Churchills? The one who sings on Parlophone E5494 is very versatile if he is the same as the Brunswick singer, but I like him less."

The songs Dalhart offered on the Parlophone record were a sloppy bit of moralizing, "It's a Man Every Time, It's a Man" (an answer to "Just a Girl That Men Forget") and "Why Don't My Dreams Come True?" Okeh records were issued in England under the Parlophone label. As for the "chromonica—a sort of accordion" it was really a harmonica.

## IV. Some Hill-Billy History

The radio craze swept the United States in 1922 and the record companies viewed its spread with justified concern. By 1923 the record business was still good, but not so good as it had been in 1920 and 1921.

It occurred to some of the officials of the Okeh company, seeking for a means of stimulating sales, that there might be possibilities of good business in sending recording expeditions into the South—especially the Southern mountains—and having native musicians sing and play for "platters" designed primarily for customers below the Mason-Dixon line. This seemed a plausible idea when they recalled how special records by Mamie Smith and other Negro "blues" performers had delighted not only colored listeners but many white ones.

A clear indication that there was a market for hill-billy records was given by the success of Victor No. 19171. On this Wendell Hall, "The Red-Headed Music Maker" from Chicago, sang "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo!"

Hall took an old country dance tune, gave it new and funny words and within a few weeks after his Victor record was issued on November 16, 1923, "Rain No' Mo'" took the nation by storm. He also recorded the song for Edison and Gennett, but it was the Victor record that touched off the deluge.

"It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'" was Victor's best seller of 1923 and one of the biggest the company had ever known. Early in 1924 newspaper advertisements said more than 2,000,000 copies had been sold within three months, but when I met general Wendell Hall in Chicago in 1951 he questioned the accuracy of that statement.

Naturally, other artists got into the act. Al Bernard recorded Hall's song for Cameo; Billy Jones and Ernest Hare for Columbia; Hare for Okeh; and Dalhart did his part. He sang it under his own name for Emerson, with a ukulele accompaniment by May Singhi Breen, and the Emerson record was issued under the Regal label with the Bob White alias.

He was called Fred King on his Domino record and Harry Harris on the National Music Lovers. It may be that the vogue of "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'" first gave Dalhart the idea there would be money in entering the country music field. A trip he and Ed Smalle made to the South in 1924 may also have helped.

Meanwhile, the Okeh scouting expedition had taken primitive transportable recording equipment to the South. Temporary studios were set up in a number of places, including Asheville, N. C., Atlanta, Ga., Bristol, and Johnson City, Tenn., St. Louis, Mo., and Dallas, Tex., and mountain men and women were invited to come in for tests.

The two most successful hill-billy performers were Fiddlin' John Carson, a middle-aged Georgian who played his own fiddle accompaniments, and a Virginian, Henry Whitter, who sang to his own accompaniment of mouth-harp and "git-tar." One of the numbers Whitter recorded, which became famous as Okeh No. 40015, was "The Wreck on the Southern Old 97," coupled with "The Lonesome Road Blues." The tune of the wreck ballad was taken from "The Ship That Never Returned," composed by Henry C. Work, a song writer of the Civil War era.

He also wrote "Marching Through Georgia," "Grandfather's Clock," "Kingdom Coming," and "Nicodemus." The words described a Southern Railway train wreck which occurred September 27, 1903, on the outskirts of Danville, Va., in which 11 persons were killed and seven injured. The last survivor of the wreck died only a few months ago.

Soon after the wreck occurred country musicians in the Danville area began to sing a doleful ditty describing it, and the song became a favorite throughout the Southern mountains. It was this which Whitter recorded. Most likely owing to the bad equipment his voice sounds terribly nasal and "back country," but the record was a sensation in the South.

It was such a success in fact that Okeh engaged another Virginia musician to make a 12-inch record of the entire number. Because of its higher price the record did not sell well in comparison with Whitter's, but it was much better sung.



Left to right: The Virginia Conservation Commission erected this marker at the spot near Danville, Va., where the Southern passenger train, "Old 97," wrecked September 27, 1903. The wreck inspired one of the most famous Southern hill-billy songs. It was the first song of its type which Vernon Dalhart recorded.

The late Kelly Harrell, a Virginia ballad singer, made the only complete record of "The Wreck of the Southern Old 97."

—Courtesy of his son, E. K. Harrell, Roanoke, Va.

The artist, Kelly Harrell, who was born in 1889 in Wythe County, Va., had an excellent voice for a singer of country ballads, and his words came out clearly. Some of Whitter's were indistinct.

I should say, however, I believe the nasal quality of Whitter's recordings was caused by some quirk in the sound processing. I knew him very well after his recording career had virtually ended and there was nothing nasal about his way of speaking, nor did his electric recordings sound through-the-nose.

Henry told me he considered the poor quality of his early Okehs was largely caused by makeshift equipment being set up for a day or two in the rear of somebody's store, where the acoustics were bad.

However that may be, the record by Harrell, who was then living at Fries, Va., but afterwards moved to Fieldale, Va., and who worked in a towel factory, remains to this day, I believe, the only one containing the full version of "The Wreck on (or of) the Southern Old 97" as traditionally sung by mountain musicians.

Whitter's record omitted the first two stanzas sung by Harrell, who died in July, 1942:

"One cloudless morning  
I stood on the mountain,  
Just watching the smoke from below;  
It was coming from a tall,  
slim smokestack,  
Way down on the Southern railroad.

"It was Ninety-Seven,  
the fastest train  
Ever run on the Southern line;  
All the freight trains that passes  
stands aside for 97,  
For she's bound  
to be at stations on time."

Whitter's version began with the third stanza:

"They give him his orders  
at Monroe, Virginia,  
Saying "Pete,  
you're way behind time!  
This is not 38, but it's old 97—  
You must put her  
in Spencer on time!"

Whitter pronounced "put" as "putt." Take notice of that name, "Spencer." It will be important later.

#### V. Dalhart Makes His First "Hill-Billy"

Whitter's records, like Fiddlin' John Carson's and Kelly Harrell's, sold so well in 1924, a year when the bottom seemed to be dropping out of the phonograph and record industry, that other companies began to issue hill-billy discs in the hope of sopping up some of the "gravy."

Their actions came to Vernon Dalhart's attention. Perhaps, as the New York Herald Tribune article said, it was Charles Edison who first suggested to him that he try his skill in the country music field.

It may be someone else had the idea or that it occurred to Dalhart himself. At any rate, he must have taken stock and decided he was well equipped for a change in his singing procedures.

He had grown up in the heart of the Texas ranch country and became familiar with cowboy songs, such as "O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." Somewhere along the way he had become an expert player of the mouth-harp and Jew's harp and he was an accomplished whistler. All he needed to invade the hill-billy territory was a guitar accompanist.



HENRY WHITTER, A VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN MUSICIAN MADE THE FIRST RECORD OF "THE WRECK OF THE 97." HE USED THIS BUSINESS CARD AFTER HE LEFT THE OKEH COMPANY AND BECAME A VICTOR ARTIST.

CLIFFVIEW, VIRGINIA

Equipped now with a good talking point, Dalhart decided to bolster his Victor fortunes by persuading that company to issue the "Wreck of the '97." How he overcame Victor's objections that it had no suitable song to occupy the B side of such a record, made the platter and touched off the most heated legal argument and hardest fought legal battle in the phonograph industry's history. That story must be reserved for next month.

#### PART IV

August, 1960

#### 1. Victor Consents to Record "The Wreck"

When Vernon Dalhart, swapped horses, so to speak, in the middle of the stream and gave up singing popular songs and concert ballads to become the most prolific recorder of hill-billy tunes, he was just entering middle age.

At the time he began to importune Victor to make a record of "The Wreck of the Southern Old 97," which he had already successfully waxed for Edison, he was 41. Judging by photographs, he resembled our present day Vice President Richard M. Nixon, who in 1924 was only a small boy.

In the fall of 1952 I attended, in Richmond, Va., a performance of Cornelia Otis Skinner's "one-woman" production, "Paris '90." The orchestra leader for Miss Skinner, Nathaniel Shilkret, in the 1920's was the Victor Company's staff accompanist and the conductor of the Victor Salmon Orchestra.

After the performance Nat and I ate dinner in a bus terminal with Quentin Riggs, a young Oklahoma City record collector, who was then stationed in military service at Camp Lee, Va. I remember the friendly, unassuming conductor surprised us by saying that in his early career he was a member of the Edison Orchestra and played for Blue Amberol records.

I had heard reports that Nat Shilkret had a big part in the success of Dalhart's historic Victor record combining "The Wreck of the '97" and "The Prisoner's Song." I asked him about that.

Was it true, I asked, that "The Prisoner's Song," which turned out to be an even greater hit than "The Wreck," was partly his own work? Nat assured me it was. He then gave this account of the genesis of what, in some respects, is the most remarkable of all records:

"In 1924," Shilkret said, "Dalhart's popularity as a maker of popular song records was declining, at least as far as Victor was concerned. He was anxious to hit on something that would give his sales a boost.

"He kept telling us about the success of the 'Wreck of the Old 97' record on Edison, and insisted that we let him record it. 'Come on and give me the date!' he would say. 'I need the money!'

"The record business was bad along then and we weren't much inclined

to experiment. Besides, we told Dalhart, he didn't have any suitable number to go on the other side of "The Wreck." I asked him if he could think of anything for the flip side.

"After a while Dalhart said he had at home a manuscript of a song written by a cousin of his which might do. I told him to bring it in. A day or two later he showed up with some pencilled notes but no music.

"The manuscript, as he submitted it, was a mess. It was only long enough to fill about half a record. I told him it couldn't be used as it stood, but that I thought it might be fixed up to do.

"He agreed for me to take it home with me. I wrote more verses and ground out a simple, mournful tune to fit the words.

"When I submitted the finished result to Dalhart he was well pleased. But," Nat said, with a touch of bitterness, "neither then nor when the record became the biggest seller ever made up to that time did he offer to give me as much as a cigar.

"We went ahead and recorded both sides," Shilkret continued. "I remember Dalhart's saying Victor was getting a bargain in that record, since one side was in the public domain and the other was mostly written by the company's musical director, so no royalties would have to be paid to publishers and composers. And that," Nat summed up, "is how 'The Prisoner's Song' came to be written and recorded.

"The original manuscript may have been written or copied from some source by Dalhart's cousin, Guy Massey, but it was unsalable and not worth recording as it stood. Dalhart himself had nothing to do with writing it. There would have been no 'Prisoner's Song' record if it had not been for my altering, editing, and adding to the manuscript."

That is Nat Shilkret's statement, and he is well known to the musical world as a man of scrupulous integrity. There are, however, other versions of the song's origin and I shall quote them with the intention of being fair.

## II: "Old 19427" Sets New Records

Dalhart's Victor record of "The Wreck of the Old 97," which bore that never-to-be-forgotten number, 19427, was nothing like as good as his Edison, even though it sported a train whistle by way of an incidental effect. The recording was below the Edison standard, and the singing was not so good.

In the Diamond Disc, Dalhart sang in his natural voice, but in the Victor he imitated the nasal sound of Henry Whitter's Okeh record from which he had copied the words. Perhaps this was done on orders from some Victor official, who suspected, with considerable reason, that lovers of country music prefer a singing-through-the-nose effect.

The record sounded a lot like an indigenous hill-billy, but it didn't sound like the former operatic artist, Vernon Dalhart. "The Prisoner's Song" was better. The voice quality was natural, without nasal tricks, and Dalhart sang it with what seemed sincerity and a genuine sympathy for the maudlin lyrics.

It seems to me "The Prisoner's Song" is a good counter-argument to people who insist that the 1920's were a time of nothing but jazz, unrestrained gaiety, and wild hysteria,

done to the accompaniment of a high crime rate and unlimited drinking in defiance of that terrible ogre, prohibition.

Actually the 1920's were a period in which ballads and comic songs divided the popular music market pretty equally between them, and jazz meant little to the average man. There was a public for jazz, but it was a specialized one confined to a small minority.

As for drinking, any fair survey of conditions 30 odd years ago compared to now would report the per capita consumption of liquor under prohibition was small compared to the amount of booze-histing today.

The crime rate also was much lower than nowadays, when every year sees a new all-time high being reached under the "beneficent" influence of repeal.

What a field-day the "wets" of 1925 would have had if they could have reached into the future and brought down today's high alcoholism rate among both men and women and the appalling prevalence of juvenile delinquency, and blamed it on prohibition!

Maudlin though the words and music of "The Prisoner's Song" undoubtedly were, the record struck a responsive chord in the public taste of the time. The Victor disc, which was recorded during hot summer weather, sold in astonishing volume from the time it was first announced in the supplement for November, 1924. Not that the supplement editor, James E. Richardson, gave it much of a send-off. He merely said:

Genuine songs of the Southern mountaineers, given with all their original lyric crudeness and their vigorous quaint, melody. The fiddle, the guitar, and the mouth-organ figure in accompaniment. "The Wreck of the Old 97" is not a steamboat, but a railroad song, a classic like "Casey Jones," and apparently much older. "The Prisoner's Song" is from the hair-brooch and weeping-willow period A Mark Twain might describe it.

Actually, since the wreck described in "Casey Jones" occurred three years before that of the "Old 97," the former song, in its original folk form, is the older of the two. A young man, newly arrived from the Middle West, who called himself "The Kansas Jayhawk," is said to have played the guitar for Dalhart in these records. (I have never heard who the fiddler was, but it may have been Murray Kellner, who played with Dalhart for several years).

The name of the young man from Kansas was Carson Robison. Finding him was the greatest piece of good fortune that ever happened to Dalhart, aside from his recording "The Prisoner's Song."

Even though the supplement description was brief, Victor must have had considerable hopes for Dalhart's record. It headed the list of popular vocal numbers for the month.

It was placed first despite such strong competition as a solo by Billy Murray; three duets by Murray and Aileen Stanley; "Tea for Two," and "I Want to Be Happy," sung by Helen Clark and Lewis James; "Where the Dreamy Wabash Flows," and "Follow the Swallow," by the Peerless Quartet; "Hard Hearted Hannah," and "Sweet Little You," by Belle Baker; two solos by Georgie Price; two by Henry Burr, and "How Come You Do Me Like You Do?" and "Knock at the Door," by Frank Crumit.

Imagine any monthly record supplement of today offering a group of such hits! But, even so, it's likely

that, in the course of time, the Dalhart record outsold all the others combined.

For good measure, there was also one other Dalhart record, No. 19442, on which he sang "Go Long, Mule." This was a pseudo-hill-billy. Although generally in the country comedy style, it had an orchestra accompaniment.

On the other side, Billy Murray and Ed Smalle sang "Way Out West in Kansas," composed by Dalhart's new associate, Carson Robison. It was the first song written by Robison to be recorded. The supplement said:

Two comedy songs that come up to the name; even the instruments of the orchestra laugh and chuckle... Vernon Dalhart, aided and abetted by an orchestra, does funny things with the tale of a mule in the first number. On the reverse side of the record the International Novelty Orchestra gets into

by Dalhart under its regular 75-cent label, but Irving Kaufman sang it on the 50-cent Harmony record also made by Columbia.

A couple of years later the vogue of the song still continued, and Victor let Reinold Werrenrath, the one-time Metropolitan Opera baritone, sing the pathetic lament of the "prisoner" on a Red Seal record, backed by his version of "The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane." To give an honest opinion, Werrenrath didn't sing "The Prisoner's Song" nearly so well as Dalhart, who is believed to have recorded it for 28 or 30 labels.

Nor was that all. The dancing public began to demand waltz versions of the prisoner dirge, and when these were made Dalhart sang the refrains. The Victor dance number, by the International Novelty Orchestra, had one of the greatest all-time



The late Carson Robison who wrote many of Dalhart's most successful records, sent this snapshot to Jim Walsh in 1940 after his record of "Life Gits Tee-jus, Don't It?" had become a big success.

all sorts of mischief while those classic entertainers, Billy Murray and Ed Smalle, are doing their best to tell you of the charms of being "Way Out West In Kansas."

The International Novelty Orchestra, like the Victor Salon group, was directed by Nat Shilkret. It is rather odd that Murray and Smalle were selected to sing "Way Out West in Kansas," for Dalhart, assisted by Robison on the guitar, recorded it for nearly every company except Victor. Too, it is interesting to recall that the song on the other side, "Go Long, Mule," was the last solo record made (for Edison) by the pioneer comedian, Arthur Collins.

## III. "The Prisoner's Song" Becomes a Craze

As soon as it became obvious that radio, which had drastically cut into the sale of records, wasn't keeping Victor's version of "The Prisoner's Song" from becoming the biggest selling vocal disc in phonograph history, every other company insisted on Dalhart's singing it.

He also sang "The Wreck of the Old 97" for most companies. (An exception was Columbia, whose version was by a blind North Carolina musician, Ernest Thompson, with a high falsetto voice). But Dalhart made "The Prisoner's Song," under several names, for nearly all of Victor's competitors. I recall one exception. Columbia issued the number

waltz hits, "After the Ball," on its reverse side, with Henry Burr doing the vocal honors.

"The Prisoner's Song" mania was not confined to this country. It sold throughout the English-speaking world. British dance bands, such as the Savoy Orpheans, recorded it.

I know of no rational way to account for the amazing vogue of "The Prisoner's Song"—a vogue it has never entirely lost. It was essentially a throwback to the morbid sentimental songs at which Mark Twain had poked fun 50 years before, and its popularity may have reflected a longing for a simpler, if sadder, way of life.

Or it may have been a relatively mild example of mass hallucination. Certainly, if the words and music are critically examined, there is nothing to praise in "The Prisoner's Song." But, regardless of lack of intrinsic merit, it made Vernon Dalhart, almost overnight, the most important recording artist of his day.

When Dalhart died, the New York Daily News said it was estimated 25,000,000 copies of his various records of "The Prisoner's Song" had been sold. That figure may not be greatly exaggerated when one recalls that the record sold not only in this country, but that matrices were imported into the British Isles, India, Australia, and New Zealand.

During much of the second half



Nathaniel Shilkret, former Victor recording director, who arranged "The Prisoner's Song" for Vernon Dalhart's recording.

—Photo by George Moillard Kesslere, B.P.

of the 1920's, wherever one went in the English-speaking world, the chances were good, in city, wilderness, or jungle, of hearing the reproduced voice of Vernon Dalhart wailing: "Now if I had wings like an angel, over these prison walls I would fly—"

#### IV. "The Prisoner's Song" Controversy

Despite his statement that Victor was in luck because of having a record with two songs in the public domain, as soon as Dalhart saw what a hit "The Prisoner's Song" was turning out to be, he had it copyrighted in the name of his cousin, Guy Massey. Thus the record companies were obliged to pay royalties to the firm which published the sheet music.

It was not long before a controversy regarding the origin of the most popular song of the day was in full swing. As the New York Herald Tribune death notice said, Dalhart told conflicting stories at different times.

At first he said it was written by Guy Massey, who lived only long enough to collect a small part of the royalties. Later he said he wrote it himself.

Nat Shilkret's side of the controversy was not generally known in those days, but a 1926 issue of a formerly popular weekly news magazine, *The Pathfinder*, had an interesting discussion of the subject. After saying that "Guy S. Massey, 27-year-old sailor-minstrel and ballad writer . . . on his death-bed claimed the words as his own," the article continued:

Readers from all sections of the country continue to write us disputing Massey's claim even to the words. Apparently the song was written years ago and made popular by the sailor-minstrel Mrs. Kate M. Bryan of Dallas, Tex., who knew the Massey family, but this is to say on the subject:

"I think it only fair to tell you what I know of Guy Massey and the Prison Song. To begin with, he had no more to do with either writing or discovering the song than you or I. Having no desire to meddle, I kept quiet until I saw that others questioned his authorship of the song."

An older brother, Robert, was a wanderer all over the U. S. in his younger days and while on his wanderings learned the Prison Song with many others, known to the "Knights of the Road" as old road songs. His brother Guy, a vaudeville actor, came from New York to visit his family, and while here Robert taught him a number of these songs thinking they would be good material for his vaudeville work. Guy returned to New York and tried to make a record of the Prison Song, but from some cause failed. He then taught it to his cousin,

Vernon Dalhart, who was accustomed to making records and who succeeded in getting the record released. The copyright was taken out in Guy's name. "When Robert learned of this he was justly indignant, but said nothing because, to use his words, 'he did not want to get Guy in bad.' Robert was living in my house at the time and discussed it with me from time to time. Guy's attitude toward this greatest musical fraud of the ages was that he 'had beat Robert to it' in the perpetration of a huge joke on the public. I don't know the exact amount of royalties he received, but it was several hundred dollars, or sufficient to pay the greater part of his hospital expenses. This is written solely in the interest of truth and with no feeling of ill-will toward Guy Massey."

I wonder why Mrs. Bryan referred to the much debated composition as "The Prison Song." Her letter brought a quick reply from Guy Massey's brother, Seaborn C. Massey, Jr., also of Dallas:

I am an older brother and best friend of Guy Stapleton Massey, deceased author of the "Prisoner's Song," the authorship of which is so much disputed. This song, both words and music, were (sic!) written by Guy and were his own original composition regardless of what others may say in reference to it. The song was copyrighted by Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., which proves beyond any doubt that there was no other composition like it or it could not have been copyrighted. Robert Massey, brother of Guy Massey, did not have any claim on "The Prisoner's Song," but did write and have published a song known as "The Chain Gang Song," something similar to the "Prisoner's Song."

Guy lived a good, clean Christian life always, and served his country during the war being honorably discharged from the U. S. navy at Armed Guard Barracks, New York, January 31, 1919, on account of injury to his hearing received while in the service. The character of my dead brother was above reproach. He received two citations for bravery while in the service which I have here with his discharge papers. He was not a convict and never was, as so many people seem to think he died in prison. He died in the U. S. army hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Tex., February 13, 1936, where I took him for treatment after leaving my home here in Dallas. His death was due to an operation on his brain which had caused him to become paralyzed some time before he died. He never received any compensation from the government, though given a medical discharge. He was totally disabled and in bed for more than a year before his death. His mother died when he was four years old—the old story of a broken-up, motherless home.

I nursed Guy during his last illness and held his hand while he passed away. May I add that his last request was, "Bury me next to Mama. I did not have her in life and I want to be next to her in death." And the last word he spoke before he died was "Mama," and then his lips were sealed forever. His last request was granted and he sleeps beside his mother in Greenwood cemetery, Dallas, Tex.

After Guy Massey's death, Dalhart received the royalties on the song.

I shall give Carson Robison's comments on the "Prisoner's Song" controversy when I discuss his association with Dalhart. In his "History of Popular Music in America," Sigmund Spaeth refers as follows to the heated debate:

Another controversial number was the notorious "Prisoner's Song," credited to Guy Massey, \*\*\* although it has been claimed that Nathaniel Shilkret, then a musical director for Victor records, was largely responsible for the finished product. This curiously effective piece of hill-billy "corn" had been recorded by Vernon Dalhart merely to fill the reverse side of the disc carrying that established favorite, "The Wreck of the Old 97," whose tune was taken bodily from Henry C. Work's "The Ship That Never Returned." To the surprise of everyone concerned, it was "The Prisoner's Song" that sold the record, carrying its distribution up to fantastic figures.

One more item about "The Prisoner's Song" and this installment

must end, with discussion of the legal battling that centered around "The Wreck of the Old 97" reserved for next month. On September 28, 1955, Joseph M. Bryant, who had been a New York theatrical booking agent, wrote me an interesting letter in which he said:

I got a two weeks engagement at the New York Strand Theater for Dalhart at \$1,750 a week. He was offered \$3,500 a week if he would dress as a prisoner. He flatly refused. All he sang was "The Prisoner's Song." . . . Nat Shilkret insists that he wrote "The Prisoner's Song."

Mr. Bryant mentioned that Dalhart made records of a song, "Many, Many Years Ago," written by Bryant's former wife, who was known in vaudeville as Madelyn Sheppard, and said it ranked next to "The Prisoner's Song" in total sales among Dalhart's records. The amazing success of record 19427 also brought Dalhart many radio engagements. Naturally, he was always expected to sing "The Prisoner's Song."

It's likely, however, that Gene Austin sang the dirge, to Reneau's mouth-harp and guitar accompaniment, for Austin obtained recording engagements for Reneau and usually did the singing, though as a rule his name did not appear on Reneau's Vocalion records. I have never heard this "Prisoner's Song" record so can't say positively that Gene was the vocalist.

Of course, other mountain musicians have recorded the number since Dalhart's day, and the same thing is true of "The Wreck of the Old 97," but as long as he was active he had a near-monopoly. Perhaps the only other singer who enjoyed more of a stranglehold on a song was Arthur Collins with "The Preacher and the Bear." From the time Collins first intoned this "coon song" classic in 1905 until he retired 20 years later, no other American singer recorded it.

After Guy Massey's pathetic death, Dalhart made several records of a song called "Guy Massey's Fare-



Left to right:

WENDELL HALL, "The Red-Headed Music Maker," stimulated interest in country music when he recorded "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'" for Victor, Edison and Gennett in 1923. It paved the way for Vernon Dalhart's records a year later

—Photo by Bloom, Chicago

THE LATE ARTHUR WALSH, who was vice president and recording manager of Thomas A. Edison, Inc., wrote an answer to "The Prisoner's Song," which he called "The Prisoner's Sweetheart." He was not related to Jim Walsh, but referred to him as "Cousin Ulysses."

—Photo by Harris & Ewing, Washington, D. C.

#### PART V

September, 1960

#### I. "The Prisoner's Song" Again

I thought when I concluded last month's installment that I had disposed of the "Prisoner's Song" except for holding in reserve some comments by Carson Robison. But I still have some notes that should be included.

Not only was the pathetic lament of the "Prisoner" recorded by dance bands here and abroad, but Eddie Peabody made a banjo record of it with Dalhart singing a refrain. In mentioning the handful of other hillbilly artists who recorded the number, I overlooked George Reneau, "The Blind Musician of the Smoky Mountains," whose name appeared on the Vocalion version.

well," composed by Guy's brother, Robert Massey, who was mentioned last month in the *Pathfinder* letter by Mrs. Kate M. Bryan, of Dallas, Tex. The "Farewell" was written in the true mauldin hill-billy vein and was, in effect, a reply to "The Prisoner's Song." The last stanza went:

"And now, with the bright wings of an angel,  
To the arms of his darling he has flown,  
And his grand ship now is anchored up  
In Heaven,  
Where there's someone to call him their own!"

Dalhart even made a number of records under the name of his dead cousin and on a few occasions called himself by Bob Massey's name. Perhaps this is the logical place to publish a list of assumed names under which he sang. I do not represent the list as complete, for a new Dalhart name turns up on "off-brand" discs every now and then. A few of the aliases that follow were

used for ordinary popular song records, but most were not adopted until Dalhart became the king of hillbilly recording:

Mack Allen, Wolfe Ballard, Jeff Calhoun, Jim Calhoun, Jimmy Cannon, Al Craver, James Cummings, Vernon Dell, Joseph Elliott, Jep Fuller, David Harris, Harry Harris, Kanawha Singers (this was a Brunswick record of a duet by Dalhart and Carson Robison), Fred King, Hugh Latimer, Tobe Little, the Lone Star Ranger, Bob Massey, Guy Massey, Warren Mitchell, Dick Morse, Josephus Smith, Billy Stuart, Allen Turner, Sid Turner, Bill Vernon, Billy Vernon, Tom Watson, Bob White, Robert Whits, and Walter Whitlock.

He, Ed Smalle, and the banjoist, John Cali, made Edison records as the Arkansas Trio; and Gennets, as the Windy City Duo. I have seen it claimed that Dalhart also made records as Frank Evans, but the only Frank Evans (and Frank Evers) records I have heard were by Frank Luther, whose style was similar to Dalhart's. Authenticated additions to this list would be appreciated.

A year or so after "The Prisoner's Song" with its vapid words and mournful music had overcome whatever critical judgment the average American listener possessed, the late Arthur Walsh, then the Edison company's recording director, wrote a reply, called "The Prisoner's Sweetheart," which met with moderate success. Oddly, Dalhart seems to have sung Walsh's song little, if at all. Recordings included one by Henry Burr for Victor, and Charles Harrison's Edison version.

## II. Back to "The Old 97"

Although plentiful controversy centered around "The Prisoner's Song," and although it became a larger seller than "The Wreck of the Old 97," the railroad song steamed up even more fuss and fury and resulted in the most protracted and expensive legal action of any record in the phonograph's history. The story is too long to tell in exact detail, but I shall touch on some of the high spots.

You may remember Nat Shilkret's saying Dalhart remarked Victor was in luck when it recorded "The Prisoner" and "The Wreck" because it was getting two songs on which composer's royalties wouldn't have to be paid. As time went on, however, persons who felt they could use the royalties began to contend they had written the words of "The Old 97," and Victor, whose sales of the number dwarfed those of all other companies, decided to find out who was responsible and pay off. I have an old scrapbook, in which a clipping from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, dated September 12, appears. The year probably was 1927.

"DANVILLE, VA.—A quiet inquiry is being made here by the representative of a recording company into the origin of the popular song, 'The Wreck of No. 97.' The inquiry becomes necessary because the recording company does not know to whom to pay accurate royalties from the sale of the record, and the suit is said to be a substantial one.

"The agent has interviewed old railroad men in Danville in the hope that they might reveal the name of the man who first wrote the song. None questioned has been able to give specific information. All of them remember in a general way that the wreck ballad has been a household number in the railroad men's repertoire, but nobody here can say where it began. The tune also is a mystery, although there are strong points of resemblance with that of 'Ships That Never Come Back.'

(Note by Jim Walsh.—There is no mystery about the tune. It is noted for note the same as Henry C. Work's "The Ship That Never Returned."

"The investigating agent, who has been here for a day, has heard different versions of the song, with verses supplied by some men which are not in the song as sung today.

"Henry Whitter, of Galax, who record-

ed the song first of all, claims to be the author, but since that claim was made others have come forward, and it is now necessary to establish legal rights. The impression has been here for years that a Danville brakeman originated the song, but there are others who say that Negro employees whistled and sang it 15 years ago . . . ."

Ten days later another dispatch from Danville said:

" . . . Fred Lewey, of Concord, N.C., a former Danville resident, who also lived in Lynchburg, asserts he is the man who wrote the words to the song and fitted them to 'The Ship That Never Returned.' He believes he will have no trouble in establishing the authenticity of his claim. He says he wrote the song after a month's effort and that with his guitar he visited different parts of Danville and played and sang it before different gatherings.

"He says it is not true that the song had its origin among the railway folk, but that it first gained a local reputation among the cotton mill people, for Lewey worked in the Riverside mills here. Lewey also gives what he claims to be the original version of the song, which is different in many respects to that now finding popularity."

By presenting a version of the song that did not follow minutely the words contained in Dalhart's records, Mr. Lewey proved himself wiser than another claimant.

## III. David Graves George Enters Suit

The real fireworks concerning authorship of "The Wreck" had not yet been detonated. They were set off when a determined Virginian named David Graves George proclaimed himself the lyric writer and went to court to collect the royalties. He came within a hair's breadth of getting them.

George, who died Jan. 24, 1948, aged 82, in Williamsburg, Va., survived by his wife, six daughters, and eight sons, said he was living in Danville at the time "Old 97" plunged from the trestle, killing nine or more persons. He contended he wrote the poem after helping with relief work. The progress of this suit against the Victor Company, which went to trial in 1930 may be traced from a few more clippings. Here is another from Danville, dated April 18:

"The suit filed by David George, of Gretna, against the Victor Talking Machine Company to recover royalties aggregating approximately \$150,000 on the sale of records of 'The Wreck of No. 97' is set for hearing at the April term of Federal court in Newark, N. J. Reports recently current that the hearing would be held at Richmond were incorrect, since representatives of the Victor Company who have been collecting evidence here and at other Southern Railroad centers say that the case is docketed in New Jersey . . . ."

An Associated Press story sent from Camden, N. J., under date of May 2, said:

"The litigation between the Victor Talking Machine Company and David Graves George over the money George alleges is due him from the phonograph record of his song, 'The Wreck of the Old 97,' was taken up again today. Before Edward I. Berry, special master of the Federal District Court, figures were presented on the company's contention that it owes George only a share of some \$86,000 in profits, while the latter holds the sum to be considerably above that amount.

"Records were demanded from the company covering the sale of the record in China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and several other foreign countries. George's attorneys seek to show the company made millions from the distribution of the disc."

The suit appears to have dragged on and on and was not finally decided for several years. Henry Whitter and Dalhart were among the persons who testified. Whitter's widow was recalled in 1951 when it was brought out in court that between six and seven million copies of "The Wreck" record had been sold, but she was not clear whether this referred to the Victor record alone or

# THE WRECK OF THE OLD 97

by HENRY WHITTER, CHARLES W. NOELL and FRED J. LEWEY



Cover design of the sheet music of Dalhart's great hit, "The Wreck of the Old 97." An elderly Virginia man, David Graves George, convinced a Federal judge he was the author of the song, but lost his case in a higher court. It was finally decided it was written by Henry Whitter, who made the first record of "The Wreck."

those made for all companies. Dalhart testified he copied the words of his records from the Okeh by Whitter.

Here are two AP clippings from Camden, dated October 15—presumably 1930. For convenience, I shall lump them into one:

"David G. George, mountaineer poet from Virginia, took the witness stand before Judge J. Boyd Avis in Federal Court here today and recited the poem, 'The Wreck of the 97,' which he charges the Victor Talking Machine Company recorded and then refused to pay him royalties. He is asking that the company be forced to account for its profits on the record . . . . Attorneys for the Victor company suggested that Mr. George sing the words of the song which he declared he composed on the Sunday following a train wreck in 1903.

"He explained, however, that he had lost his voice two years ago. The company contends that an investigation by folk-lore experts has established other persons as authors of the song. A portable Victrola was used in court to reproduce music of an old popular song, 'The Ship That Never Returned,' which George says he appropriated for the melody of his song."

"Judge . . . Avis . . . has under advisement the suit . . . of David Graves George . . . asking accounting of records of the song, 'The Wreck of the Old 97,' made by Victor, preparatory to instituting claim for royalties. George claims he wrote the original words. The company does not deny the words were written by George, but contends the records and his verses are not identical."

That last sentence was a misstatement. As will be seen, the flaw in George's claim was that the words he read to the court and those on Dalhart's record were identical!

Another Associated Press clipping

from Camden, dated February 4, says George's claim to authorship had been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, but I suspect this was a mistake for the Federal Court already mentioned:

"The question of dividing the profits of 'The Wreck of the Old 97' is still unfinished business. David Graves George whose claim to authorship of the barber shop ballad and to a share of the Victor Talking Machine Co.'s marketing profits was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, faces a suit asking for 20 per cent of his share.

"Executors of the estate of Morris Davidson, who died last May in Richmond, told Federal Court in a petition that Davidson loaned \$300 to George to help defray the cost of the suit against the Victor company. George is awaiting an accounting. Davidson estate lawyers want the money held up until their claim is heard. The court fixed February 14 for a hearing."

Final disposition of George's claim is found in an undated clipping from an unidentified newspaper, which however, I think probably was the *Baltimore Sun*. The year appears to have been 1933. Under the heading, "Court Denies Virginian's Claim He Composed 'Wreck of Old 97,'" it says:

"The United States Circuit Court of Appeals here yesterday set aside a decision that would have meant a fortune in royalties for a Virginia mountaineer who claimed authorship of the hill-billy song, 'The Wreck of the Old 97.'

"In the opinion of the Circuit Court, the claimant, David Graves George, himself, copied the same words of the saga of the train wreck from a Victor phonograph record sung by Vernon Dalhart.

"When the case was heard in Federal

Court in Camden in 1930, the Virginian, who is 67, declined to sing the plaintive ballad, saying his voice was gone, but he undertook to recite the words, reading from his supposed original manuscript in an old almanac.

"In the lower court, Federal Judge John Boyd Avis expressed 'an abiding conviction amounting to a moral certainty' that George did compose and write the song shortly after the wreck occurred," but Circuit Judge J. Warren Davis, in a 19 page opinion, now virtually brands George's claim as false. George contended he wrote the words of the song in 1903 after helping to remove nine bodies, including that of Pete, the engineer, from the wreckage of the Southern Railroad's first mail train, No. 97, at North Danville, Va., on September 27 the same year.

"The Victor Company said it purchased recording rights of the song from three other Virginians. According to the Circuit Court, the composition is that of Henry Whitter, a Virginia musician, who based it on a poem written by Charles Noel, who was 17 when the train wreck occurred near his home. Whitter shortened Noel's poem, gave it the tune of 'The Ship That Never Returned,' and added to it the final stanza of the song, 'The Parted Lovers.'

"Circuit Judge Davis says the evidence plainly shows that George copied the words of the folksong from the phonograph record made by Vernon Dalhart . . . A short time before that, in 1927, an advertisement had appeared in a Richmond (Va.) newspaper, seeking information regarding the writer of 'The Wreck of Old 97,' and George went to a neighbor's house where the Dalhart phonograph rendition of that song was played, Judge Davis says.

"Dalhart had made several mistakes in copying the words, and George made the same mistake in the copy of the song he produced in the lower court; therefore it seems clear, Judge Davis says, that George must have copied the words from the phonograph record. The court opinion points to other inconsistencies in George's claim . . . Attorneys for George estimated that 5,000,000 copies of the song have been circulated."

It may be of interest to know the mistakes Dalhart made in transcribing the words from Whitter's poorly recorded Okeh record. Where Whitter had mentioned a town in North Carolina, saying "You must put her in Spencer on time," Dalhart understood Spencer as Center and sang it accordingly.

When Whitter sang "it was on that grade that he lost his air brakes," he telescoped that last word and made it sound like "average," which Dalhart took it to be. The last stanza contains the line, "Now ladies, you must take warning from this time now and learn," but Dalhart changed "learn" into "on."

Graves probably had deluded himself into believing that he wrote the song, but since his words correspond exactly to Dalhart's defective ones they were a dead give-away to Judge Davis that they were taken from the Victor record—as they should have been to Judge Avis. But somehow Davis saw what Avis did not!

Sigmund Spaeth sums up the protracted and senseless litigation in his invaluable book, "A History of Popular Music in America," by saying:

"About 60 claims came in, all obviously spurious, but when Victor decided to drop the matter, one claimant acquired a lawyer and brought suit. He actually won his case in the lower court by proving that he had been present at the wreck itself . . . The clear evidence that the so-called 'manuscript' had been written many years later, and obviously copied from the Victor record itself seemed to make no difference. For a time it appeared that a quarter of a million dollars would change hands as a result of this absurd decision, but after several appeals, blind justice finally joined itself with common sense, and the lyricist of 'The Wreck of the Old 97' remains a mystery to this day."

#### IV. A Talk With Whitter's Widow

Despite Dr. Spaeth's statement that the authorship of "The Wreck"

remains a mystery, at least three persons today are being paid royalties from the sale of the records and sheet music. They are Henry Whitter's widow from his second marriage, who when I met her in 1951, was Mrs. Charles Hader, of Crumpler, N. C. Also Charles W. Noel, mentioned in the clipping quoted a few paragraphs back, and Fred J. Lewey, who had the good sense to say his original version of "The Wreck" differed markedly from the one recorded by Dalhart. I believe a son of Whitter's by his first marriage also shares in the royalties.

I came to meet Mrs. Hader in an unusual way. One day in the late summer of 1951 I received a long distance telephone call from the Elliott Shapiro, president of the New York music publishing firm of Shapiro, Bernstein & Company.

He asked if I would mind going on a mission for him and said I had been recommended to him by my old friend, the late Fred Hager, who died a year or so ago. After telling me he read everything I published in HOBBIES and Variety with warm interest, Mr. Shapiro remarked that the sheet music of "The Wreck of the Old 97" had been copyrighted in 1925, and since copyrights run for 28 years, would expire in 1952.

Every effort, he said, was being made to obtain the signatures of the copyright holders to a new contract, but Mrs. Whitter had refused to sign. Could I possibly go into the mountains of Western North Carolina where she lived, armed with a new contract, and use my persuasive powers on the lady?

He explained that Fred Hager also was a party to the deal because when he was head of Okeh's recording activities Henry Whitter had assigned him a share of his royalties from all recordings of "The Wreck" except the Columbia (I have always wondered why it was withheld) and in the sheet music. Could I do both him and Fred a favor by trying to bring Mrs. Hader to terms, so the copyright might be renewed?

Mr. Shapiro offered me a generous fee, and I said that my vacation was coming up in a couple of weeks and I would make the trip if he would wait until I was free to travel. He agreed, and within a few days, I received a supply of blank contracts, and a full history of the song's tortuous career.

So it happened that one morning, after spending the night in a hotel at Abingdon, Va., I found myself on the Norfolk and Western Railway's "accommodation train," which made a trip each day except Sunday from Abingdon to West Jefferson, N. C. In so doing it climbed the highest grade of any train operating in the Eastern United States and chugged past White Top the highest mountain in Virginia, where a folk music festival used to be held each summer.

The train was the slowest I had ever been on, and I hadn't occupied it long, before a young mountain man, his wife, and their baby got on as my only fellow passengers. The man was richly under the influence of alcohol and his wife surprised me by puffing cigarettes, one after the other.

The man soon revealed himself to be a baseball enthusiast. "Hey, bud!" he yelled at me, after the train had gone a few miles. "You like baseball?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Me too," he returned with great satisfaction. "Who you think's gonna win that there 'Merican League Pen-

nant?"

"The Yankees," I replied.

"Me too!" he bellowed, waving a bottle in my direction. "I'm a real ol'-time Yankee fan! Come over here an' have a drink on me!"

"Thank you," I said, "but I don't drink."

A few minutes later the same routine again was gone through: "Hey, bud! You like baseball?" and the rest of it down through the invitation to drink and my insistence that I was a tee-totaler.

After I had suffered through this a dozen times, the man's wife (removed the latest cigarette from her mouth long enough to) exclaim: "Oh, fer gosh sake, why don't you leave the feller alone? He's done tole you a million times he likes baseball an' he thinks them Yankees will win!"

"Well," her husband returned indignantly, "he mought-a changed his mind, moughn't he?"

And he continued to call baseball inquiries to me. It was a relief when he stumbled off the train, followed by the woman and baby, at some hamlet short of West Jefferson, and I was able to travel the remainder of the distance, untroubled by superfluous conversation and cigarette smoke, to both of which I am allergic.

I had considerable difficulty learning where Mrs. Hader lived, but eventually a taxi driver was found who knew the way to the little town of Crumpler, which I recollect as being about 14 miles from West Jefferson. When we reached her home she wasn't there, but someone told us she probably had gone to her father's, a couple of miles away. This proved to be a small house situated far below the highway and invisible from the road. It seemed to me I walked a quarter of a mile down one stepping stone after another, before I reached it.

Mrs. Hader was on the back porch, shelling peas, and she proved to be friendly, but in no mood to sign a contract. She told me she and her present husband wanted to make a new record of "The Wreck of the Old 97" and were going to New York the next month to see about it. She said she would call then on Mr. Shapiro and talk about renewing the contract.

I had introduced myself as an old friend of her late husband and told her that when I knew Henry Whitter he had a singing partnership with G. B. Grayson, a blind man who lived at Laurel Bloomery, N. C. She said Grayson had been killed years before in an automobile accident, and Henry had spent the last years of his life in a North Carolina institution, suffering from an ailment which had worn him down to "a bag of skin and bones"—a shadow of the robust young man I had known. I believe she said he died in 1941.

When I left, after delivering my most persuasive arguments and presenting as good a case as I could in behalf of Mr. Shapiro, I still didn't have a signed contract, but I did seem to have the friendship of Mrs. Hader, whom I liked in return. The letter I sent Mr. Shapiro, relating my adventures, however, pleased him so much, that he considerably increased the fee he had agreed to

pay me, so I didn't feel the trip was entirely a failure.

Several months later he wrote me that Mrs. Hader had finally "fallen into line" along with the other persons sharing in the copyright, and publication rights of "The Old 97" were now protected until 1980, when it will go into public domain. The last survivor of the wreck died a few months ago.

Before leaving the subject of "The Wreck" and proceeding to discuss less litigious aspects of Vernon Dalhart's later career, I should like to mention a few odd recordings. There was, for one, the dance band version played for Brunswick by Carl Fenton's Orchestra with a vocal retrain by Billy Jones and Ernest Hare.

A genuine oddity was a version of the song on a Grey Gull record sung by Arthur Fields, with words credited to someone named Watters, and bearing little resemblance to those in Dalhart's recordings. Grey Gull was said to have a custom of issuing a hit tune on one side of a record, then giving aspiring song writers \$50 to write something to go on the other side, with the understanding that royalties would not be demanded. Probably "Watters" received \$50 to do a non-royalty version of "The Wreck." This was possible, since a song title cannot be copyrighted and the tune was public property.

And several fanciers of hill-billy music have asked me not to overlook the excellent Columbia record of "The Wreck of the Old 97," made in 1927 by Gid Tanner's Skillet Lickers, assisted by Clayton McMichen and Riley Puckett. This record was good value, for it contained another back country classic, "John Henry (The Steel Drivin' Man)" on its reverse side—a rendition which the Columbia catalog editor facetiously termed "the musical millenium."

#### POSTSCRIPT

After the manuscript of this installment had gone to the printers, I was wakened from a nap on the afternoon of Sunday, June 5th, by a telephone call from a HOBBIES folder operator in Oak Park, Ill. My caller said he was a student of folk-music and I was mistaken in quoting the words of "The Wreck of the Old 97" as referring to the engineer as "Pete." The engineer, the young man said, was a man named Brodie, who was called "Steve" from the Steve Brodie who insisted he jumped from the Brooklyn bridge. My informant said he had a book of folk-music in which the name was printed as Steve, and he wanted to change "Pete" to "Steve" in my copy.

I am sure that, historically speaking, he was right. The sheet music also gives the name as Steve. Nevertheless, Dalhart sings it "Pete" in all his records, including the electrically remade Victor and Bluebird. On replaying Henry Whitter's original Okeh record, I am inclined to think he says "Steve" rather than "Pete," but like many of the other words in that record, it is indistinct. So "Steve" is probably another word that Dalhart sang wrong and David Graves George miscopied after him. Dalhart also continued in his later records to say "Center" for "Spencer" and "average" for "air brake."

Incidentally, after Dalhart ceased to make new records in this country, in the early 1930's, his old ones were issued regularly in England, Australia, and New Zealand, and sold well for several years.

Several folk-music enthusiasts have urged me to devote my articles hereafter to nothing but the so-called "hill-billy" artists, but that will not be done. Such performers were not pioneer recorders and are outside the scope of this department. Dalhart has been written about at length because he was established as a singer of popular and semi-classical music before he went into the "folk music" field as a synthetic "hill-billy."

## PART VI

October, 1960

### I. Carson Robison Joins Dalhart

It is a relief to turn from the confusion and controversy that surrounded Vernon Dalhart's most famous record and narrate some of the major events of his later phonograph career.

From 1925 through 1928, Dalhart was the busiest and most popular of all recording artists. Singing for every company of even the slightest importance, he made thousands of records—just how many, nobody knows, and probably no one ever will know.

Some Dalhart enthusiasts have insisted that I publish a complete list of his recordings, but space limitation alone would prevent that, even if it were possible, which it isn't, to compile an errorless discography of the tenor's work. And I lack the time to attempt such a colossal undertaking. I have been told that Marion Hoffman of Kansas, has more than 3,500 Dalhart records and a Chicago man owns almost as many.

If Dalhart's first great break was the "fortuitous concurrence of circumstances" that led him to combine his Victor record of "The Wreck of the Old 97" with "The Prisoner's Song" his next vast slice of luck was becoming associated with the greatest of all writers of hill-billy songs, Carson Robison.

"Robbie" who was born in Chetopa, Kansas, August 4, 1890, and died March 24, 1957, in St. Francis Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., was self-taught in music. When he was 15 he became a professional entertainer in the Midwest and in his early 30's worked for a time in Chicago with Wendell Hall, "The Red-headed Music Maker."

Besides being an excellent singer and guitar player, he was also a phenomenal whistler. But above all he was a song writer who knew exactly what buyers of country-type records wanted and gave it to them unerringly.

Coming to New York in 1924 with almost no money, he soon obtained work with the recording companies and made Victor records as an assisting artist to Hall before beginning his folk-music association with Dalhart. The personal relationship between Dalhart and Robison was never cordial and it ended in bitterness, but during the three years in which they were closely associated they were an ideal combination from the standpoint of the type of music Robison wrote and Dalhart sang.

When Robison severed the connection Dalhart's popularity suffered an immediate decline. At the time



Charlie Bowman's daughters, Jennie and Pauline, also were recording artists. Their Columbia record of "Railroad, Take Me Back" (written by their father), and "Old Lonesome Blues" was especially popular.

their partnership began, incidentally, Carson had just published his first successful song in the pseudo-hill-billy genre, "Way Out West in Kansas."

### II. Edison Cylinder Hill-Billies

Since Dalhart's first successful hill-billy record was made for Edison, it should be interesting to observe in some detail the steady flow of such waxings which he turned out for both the Diamond Discs and, through dubbing, for the Blue Amberol cylinders.

His popularity with the dwindling number of cylinder record buyers from 1925 through 1929 was so great it would hardly be an exaggeration to say his hill-billy records, appealing strongly to country customers, were about the only thing that kept the Blue Amberols going as long as they did.

During his Edison career, more solo Blue Amberols were issued by Dalhart than by any other artist, although Billy Murray appeared in a larger number of records, counting the Premier Quartet offerings in which he sang the lead.

I have counted 137 issued Blue Amberol solos by Dalhart, and one other, "The Sneeze Song," which was assigned a number 5061, but not placed on the market. His list also includes nine duets with Gladys Rice, one with Al Bernard, and one with Evelyn Cox.

The August, 1925, list of "latest Edison Amberol Records" (Edison by that time had quit calling them Blue Amberols) included Dalhart singing, Madelyn Shepard's song "Many, Many Years Ago," and Robison composition, "The Time Will Come," which had an irresistible shuffling rhythm.

In September there were three, "Doin' the Best I Can," whose composer was listed as M. T. Slaughter—that is, Dalhart himself. It had a rather elaborate accompaniment of harmonica, fiddle, piano, and guitar. Also included were that great back-country favorite, "The Rovin' Gambler," and "The Runaway Train,"

the latter jointly credited to Robert Massey and Robison.

Only 12 Blue Amberols were issued in November, but Dalhart starred in three of these and sang an incidental chorus in two fox-trots, "Cecilia," played by Billy Wynne's Greenwich Village Inn, and "Red Hot Henry Brown," by the Georgia Melodians. He had not yet completely abandoned popular songs for hill-billies.

Records of the latter type were "She's Comin' 'Round the Mountain," "The Little Rosewood Casket," and "The John T. Scopes Trial (The Old Religion's Better After All)." This last was an appeal to backwoods religious fundamentalism which Robison wrote (under the pen name of Carlos B. McAfee) and Dalhart sang both, I suspect, with tongue-in-cheek.

Robison, by the way, wrote songs under many names other than his own. He told me he couldn't remember how he hit on "McAfee," but when he turned out hill-billies under the guise of Maggie Andrews he was using his mother's maiden name. "Zeb Turney's Gal" is a charming number of the country kind which he composed under the Maggie Andrews pseudonym.

In the February, 1926, supplement out of 15 Blue Amberols listed, four were Dalhart's rustic specialties—"Behind These Gray Walls," "Sydney Allen," "The Unknown Soldier's Grave," and "Zeb Turney's Gal." In addition, he sang the refrain of "The Prisoner's Song" played rather belatedly as a waltz dance record by Kaplan's Melodists.

Page two was devoted to a complete listing of "Mountaineer and Rural Ballads," comprising the 22 of that type Dalhart had made prior to the February supplement. The list was prefaced with this statement: "We have had such an enormous demand and so many inquiries about this type of record sung by Vernon Dalhart with violin, harmonica, and guitar accompaniment that we are listing them this month for your convenience in ordering."

At the bottom of the page was an inquiry which in those days appeared in every issue of the Blue Amberol monthly supplement: "Does your collection include the only recording of Mr. Edison's voice? 'Let Us Not Forget—A Message to the American People,' by Thomas A. Edison, No. 3756."

This constant reminder caused Mr. Edison's brief spoken remarks to become one of the best selling Edison records. Yet today everybody who finds a copy seems to think he has stumbled on the only one in existence.

Let me answer many inquiries by saying that Edison discs and Blue Amberol cylinders of "Let Us Not Forget" are not—the high prices sometimes asked to the contrary—either valuable or rare. Plenty of other folks beside yourself have records of Mr. Edison's voice.

And so the deluge of Dalhart cylinders continued, month after month. As a final example, in March, 1926, besides singing the refrain of the waltz record of "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen," by Kaplan's Melodists, he also did "Frank Dupre," "The Boston Burglar," "The Freight Wreck at Altoona," and "The Wreck of the 1256." Both of the railroad songs were from the pen of the prolific Robison.

### III. Hill-Billy Diamond Discs

Following the course of Dalhart's Edison Diamond Disc hill-billies

amounts to much the same thing as tracking his cylinders, for as has been pointed out, the cylinders were copied from the discs. It is interesting, however, to note that in June, 1925, he combined his own song, "Doin' the Best I Can," with Robison's "The Time Will Come."

Robison was now playing the guitar in all Dalhart records and contributing incidental whistling effects, while the violinist was "Fiddlin' Murray Kellner," a gifted musician who later had his own salon orchestra which recorded for Edison.

In July, Dalhart sang that ancient tear-jerker, "In the Baggage Coach Ahead" (written by a Negro pullman porter, Gussie L. Davis), and combined it with "Many, Many Years Ago." By October Dalhart's Diamond Disc popularity was reaching full tide, for he had no less than four double-faced records of hill-billy tunes besides singing the refrain of the dance record of "Red Hot Henry Brown."

The hill-billies were "The Chain Gang Song," written by Bob Massey, and doubled with "The New River Train." (This song, named for a slow train that runs through the mountains of Southwest Virginia, was copied from one of Henry Whitter's Okeh records). Also, "The Little Rosewood Casket," and "The Picture That Is Turned Toward The Wall;" "She's Comin' 'Round the Mountain," and "The Boston Burglar;" and finally, "The John T. Scopes Trial," coupled with one of Dalhart's best sellers, "The Death of Floyd Collins."

The latter gruesome opus, commemorating the death in a mountain cave of a young Kentucky man, was written by an Atlanta, Ga., blind minister, the Rev. Andrew Jenkins, and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Irene Spain. Jenkins himself was a popular Okeh recording artist both under his own name and the slight disguise of "Blind Andy." "Floyd Collins" swept the South almost as strongly as "The Wreck of the Old 97" had conquered it a year before.

It will be seen from the foregoing that Dalhart, besides relying heavily on such writers as Carson Robison and Andrew Jenkins, was reviving many old-time popular songs and singing them in the hill-billy vernacular. Some of his incidental touches were masterpieces, such as the droll way in which he dragged out "husband" in the final refrain of "The Baggage Coach Ahead."

These touches, however, may have made the more discerning country customers suspect he was having a bit of fun at the expense of the music they liked. I have often wondered if, in spite of the rich financial rewards of singing hill-billies, Dalhart didn't have many struggles with his artistic conscience.

Dissatisfaction with the type of music to which he had descended, combined with overwork, may have caused the irritability and impatience which annoyed many of his fellow recording artists during this, his most successful period.

Dalhart's contribution to the November, 1925, Edison list was even larger. He made both sides of four records and one side of a fifth. The combinations were "Dear, Oh Dear" and "The Sneeze Song," "I Wish I Was a Single Girl Again," and "After the Ball," "The Wreck of the Shenandoah," and "The Wreck of the 1256." (Both written by Robison, who not only wrote songs concerning any ancient railroad wreck he could hear about, but also seized on current calamities, such as the wreck of the Shenandoah dirigible,

for his inspiration); "Jesse James" and "The Ship That Never Returned" and for the finale, "Casey Jones," coupled with "Got the Railroad Blues (But I Haven't Got The Railroad Fare)," sung by Gene Austin with a piano accompaniment by Charles Bates.

The October supplement included this statement: "So great is the demand for these unique records by Dalhart and Company that we have difficulty keeping up with it. Above are listed eight selections for which we have had countless requests."

By May, 1926, the number of Dalhart's monthly offerings was being curtailed, but there was no let-up in his popularity. This month was notable for a record coupling "The Floyd Collins Waltz," and "Better



Charlie Bowman "Champion Fiddler of East Tennessee," who made Brunswick, Columbia, Okeh, and Vocalion records, was a friend and admirer of Dalhart. He now lives in retirement at Union City, Ga.

*Get Out Of My Way*, the latter an old-fashioned country dance tune.

Both numbers were played by an instrumental group, Dalhart's Texas Panhandlers, with vocal refrains by Dalhart and featuring Murray Kellner's fiddling. Dalhart planned to turn out a series of records by this combination, but these two selections, which they recorded for most of the important companies, seem to be all they did.

Although Robison had accompanied Dalhart in all the Diamond Discs under discussion, he did not begin harmonizing his baritone voice with Dalhart's tenor until No. 51807 was issued in October, 1926. This combined two of his songs, "Just a Melody," and "When You're Far Away."

The names *Dalhart* and *Robison* were thereafter printed in capital letters whenever they appeared together in an Edison supplement—a distinction given to no other artist. In January, 1927, they sang "The Dying Girl's Message," and "If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again." The catalog editor dryly remarked: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now."

By the time this supplement appeared Edison was beginning to make records by a few authentic Southern musicians. There had already been a few by a Tennessee mountaineer, Fiddlin' Powers, and his children. And just below the Dalhart-Robi-

son duets were listed "John Henry" and "Wild Bill Jones" by Ernest V. Stoneman, a Galax, Va., resident, who called himself "The Blue Ridge Mountaineer." "Dad" Stoneman is still living in Maryland, but he returns each year to take part in a mountain music festival at Galax, which was also the home town of Henry Whitter for most of Whitter's life.

In February, 1927, Dalhart made an Edison record of two songs which had previously been popular with Southern patrons on a Columbia disc by a North Carolina hill-billy, Charlie Pooie: "I'm the Man that Rode the Mule Around the World," and "Can I Sleep in your Barn Tonight, Mister?"

In March, Robison was represented by his astonishing whistling record of "Nola," and his own composition, "Whistle-Itis." April was marked by two of Dalhart's best Edison numbers, which unlike most of his recordings, approached the true folk vein, "Don't Let the Deal Go Down," and "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie"—a song, he no doubt had heard many times during his boyhood ranch days in Texas. (The tenor always sounds a little homesick to me when I hear his records of "I'd Like to be in Texas When They Round Up in the Spring").

Edison's October supplement contained one of Carson Robison's most successful songs, "My Blue Ridge Mountain Home," sung by Dalhart and Robison—to follow the supplement style. It was coupled with another attractive Robison composition, "When the Moon Shines Down Upon the Mountain," sung by Dalhart alone. On second record Dalhart sang "The Mississippi Flood," and "The Wreck of the Number Nine," both written by Robison. This is one of the few Edison records by Dalhart not in my collection.

Mentioning "The Wreck of the Number Nine" reminds me of what I believe is the only time I ever felt that I was profiteering from the sale of a second-hand record. In June, 1958, I received a letter from Morgan Seymour, police officer of Carmel, N. Y. Mr. Seymour, who collects everything associated with American railway trains of the steam locomotive era, said he had made a long but unsuccessful search for a copy of Dalhart's record of "The Wreck of the Number Nine," on any brand.

He explained it had been one of his favorites when he was a boy and now he wanted it to play for his children. Despairing of ever finding the record in his home environment, he had turned to me because I lived in the South where such discs were more popular. He said he'd gladly pay \$10 for a copy in good condition.

It happened that I had an excellent Brunswick record of the number, which probably hadn't cost me more than a dime. I replied to Mr. Seymour, telling him I'd let him have the record at his suggested price, and he promptly sent me \$11—the extra dollar to cover the postage.

Feeling pangs of conscience at what I felt was over-charging him, I also included a Domino record of the same song, not in as good condition as the Brunswick, and there probably never was a box of records more carefully packed. Within a few days I received a happy letter from Mr. Seymour, saying the two had arrived safely and were being played over and over.



The late "Jack" Reedy, banjoist and recording artist of Marion, Va., was proud of knowing Vernon Dalhart. He is shown here outside a tent in which a folk-music festival was being held on White Tap Mountain.

Since then he has visited Roanoke, taking movies of old-time Norfolk and Western trains. We talked by phone but unfortunately had no chance to get together in person. My policeman friend probably will be interested to know that just a few days ago I found in a Goodwill store a Romeo record of "The Wreck of the Number Nine," coupled with "If Your Love Like the Rose Should Die" sung by Dalhart and Robison.

But let me make it clear that Mr. Seymour doesn't want to pay \$10, or anything like it, for other Dalhart records. He offered that price only because the record had sentimental associations for him and he hadn't been able to find it in New York. He is not interested in buying other Dalhart records, and neither am I. So please don't send us record lists and ask us to quote "best price!"

Late in 1957 Edison published a folder giving a list of all the hill-billy Diamond Discs that had been issued up to then. Some were not really hill-billies, but renditions of old-time popular songs or later songs in the old-fashioned manner.

Included were one by Gene Austin; eight by Austin and George Reneau; 10 by John Baltzell, "champion old-time fiddler;" two by Al Bernard; six by another fiddler, Jasper Bisbee; two by the Dixie Mountaineers; four by Fiddlin' Powers and Family; 10 by Henry Ford's Old-Time Dance Orchestra; one by Ernest Hare; one by Charles Harrison; two by Harvey Hindemyer, and Earle Tuckerman; two by Kaplan's Melodists; one by the Sam Patterson Trio; two by Manuel Romain; eight by Allen Sisson, "Champion Fiddler of Tennessee;" 14 by Ernest V. Stoneman; seven by Stoneman and the Dixie Mountaineers—and 58 by Dalhart, three by *Dalhart* and *Robison*, and two by Dalhart's Texas Panhandlers!

Unintentionally, I skipped past the July, 1927, Edison supplement in which Dalhart had two double-faced records: "The Crepe on the Old Cabin Door," coupled with "Kennie Wagner's Surrender" (the latter referring to a notorious East Tennessee desperado who, I believe, is still liv-

ing); and "Lindbergh, the Eagle of the U.S.A." doubled with "Lucky Lindy."

The latter two songs, of course, hymned Charles A. Lindbergh's successful flight to France in May, 1927. Dalhart's restrained versions of the hastily contrived tunes were less impressive than the two rousing, heavily amplified ones which Irving Kaufman made for Okeh under the name of Noel Taylor and which were on sale within 10 days after Lindbergh landed.

My old friend, the late E. W. (Jack) Reedy of Marion, Va., made Victor and Brunswick records as a member of the Blue Ridge Ramblers and Jack Reedy and His Walker's Mountain String Band (Walker's Mountain is a few miles from my former home in Marion). He used to tell me with pride of how he met Dalhart in Brunswick's New York studios, when, as Jack phrased it, "he was puttin' on 'Lucky Lindy' and 'Lindbergh, the Eagle of the U.S.A.'"

Jack recalled Carson Robison as the guitar player, and said the fiddler was "a little Jewish fellow from Brooklyn" — probably Murray Kellner. Jack always insisted that Dalhart, in a friendly conversation, asked him where he was from, and when Jack replied "Virginia," Dalhart retorted, "If you're just from Virginia you don't know anything about the South. You ought to see Georgia, where I came from!"

I told Jack that Dalhart wasn't from Georgia, he was from Texas, but my friend insisted with some heat that Georgia was what Dalhart had said, and he couldn't be convinced otherwise. Until he died it was one of Jack's proudest recollections that he had actually shaken hands with the man who stood far above anybody else at that time in the hill-billy record field.

Jack shared the common hill-billy musician's belief that Dalhart had made "over \$6,000,000" from his records. That, of course, was a grotesque exaggeration.

Jack Reedy's mention of Georgia reminds me of something that puzzles me. I once met J. Frank Smith, who headed a company of "Sacred Singers" that made some highly popular Columbia records. He told me that Dalhart was a member of the troupe at one time during his recording career.

Our talk was hurried, and I didn't ask for particulars. I wish now I had. But it's inconceivable to me that Dalhart could ever have taken part in the wanderings of a group of country musicians after he had become such a successful recording artist that he must have sung both day and night to fill all his engagements. Perhaps he made a few "courtesy appearances" with the Sacred Singers when he and Ed Smalle toured the South in 1924.

Another folk musician who remembers with pleasure more than one meeting with Dalhart is 71-year-old Charlie Bowman, who has lost a leg in recent years and now lives a shut-in-life in Union City, Ga. Charlie began making Columbia, Okeh, Brunswick, and Vocalion records as fiddler for Al Hopkins' Buckle Buster and as the leader of Charlie Bowman and His Buddies in the 1920's when he lived in Johnson City, Tenn.

He says he won more fiddling awards than any other competing musician. Charlie also has two daughters, Pauline and Jennie, who made Columbia records in their teens, and,

as their fond father says, "were for years the best-known kids in East Tennessee." Charlie wrote the following in a letter to me:

"I knew Dalhart very well—met him in New York on one of my recording dates and several occasions later. He was a very nice fellow to talk to, and was a very good mouth-harp player and singer—very serious about his recording work along with Carson Robison. Vernon was high tempered. He would fly off the handle if he made a mistake while making a recording, but he only got mad at himself. I have sat in the studio with him while he was recording."

Although, as will be seen in the concluding installment, Dalhart's popularity took a tail spin after 1927, his appeal probably held up with Edison record buyers better than with any other group, and his name continued to appear regularly in the Diamond Disc lists until the final supplement appeared late in 1929. Well before that time, however, he had lost the invaluable services of Carson Robison. But prior to relating their unfortunate estrangement it would be well to turn back a few years and briefly discuss some of his recordings for Victor and other companies.

For the moment, however, let's go overseas and chuckle at some of the reviews of Dalhart records that appeared in the *Gramophone and Talking Machine News* of the late 1920's and early 1930's. I have already indicated Dalhart's recordings won considerable popularity throughout the British Empire and continued to be issued in Australia and New Zealand for several years after his vogue had passed here. But they didn't earn the approval of Ogilvie Mitchell, the bearded, cantankerous 80-year-old who, for many years, had done the reviewing for the *T.M.N.* Mitchell had an anti-American attitude which is glaringly obvious in what he said about the Dalhart discs.

I believe a Regal record, reviewed in May, 1926, must have been made by Dalhart and taken from Columbia matrices. If so, it gives us a new assumed name for him — Herbert VERNON. The songs, "A Boy's Best Friend Is His Mother," and "After the Ball," had been recorded by Dalhart for Columbia and other American companies. Mr. Mitchell crustily wrote:

"The first of these is a very old ditty of at least 40 years ago... Is Columbia sure that 'After the Ball' was by Charles K. Harris? We always understood it to have been written by George Le Brun. Herbert Vernon has a nice light tenor and sings with a curious accent."

The "curious accent" undoubtedly was American. And Mitchell must have been about the only person with some knowledge of popular music who didn't believe Charles K. Harris wrote "After the Ball."

When Zonophone issued "The Governor's Pardon," and "The Engineer's Child" in July, 1926, Mitchell said:

"This is so very American in accent and intonation that we could hardly understand a word of either of the songs. We are told that the record will make a wide appeal. Well, perhaps so, but we doubt it."

It is interesting that in August Zonophone issued a record of "The Prisoner's Song" as a "grand organ" solo by Spencer Shaw.

In February, 1927, Dalhart had a Zonophone record of "There's a New Star in Heaven Tonight" (a pathetic tribute to the late Rudolf Valentino)

and Carson Robison's song, "An Old-Fashioned Picture." Said Mitchell:

"If, as we are told, this gentleman specializes in this type of song, we are sorry for the poor people who have to listen to him."

In July, 1927, when Dalhart and Robison were represented with Zonophone duets of "Far Away In Hawaii," and "Just a Melody," the reviewer wrote:

"These two American entertainers entertain after their own fashion, which is not ours. Those who prefer American style to our own will revel over this record."

(A few years later Robison and his Pioneers went to England and were sensationaly successful on records, stage and radio. It is amusing to find Mitchell shortly after the foregoing remarks appeared referring to the Southern-born Gene Austin as being a "whispering baritone, with a rich Coney Island accent."

In December, 1928 Zonophone brought out a record of "Climbin' Up De Golden Stairs" by Dalhart, Robison, and Hood, and "Little Green Valley" by Dalhart and Robison. Mr. Mitchell snorted:

"Except for the inclusion of the word, 'golden,' in the first title, we cannot imagine the reason for the inclusion of the jews-harp in the above, especially as we are unable to distinguish the peculiar tone (if any) among the rest of the twangs... For the rest the disc is sprightly enough—well sung and admirably recorded."

Dalhart was virtually a has-been in the States by December, 1930, but in that month Regal issued a record of him and Miss Hood singing "The Deacon's Prayer," which was performed in jazz style, with a "hot" accompaniment, despite its religious title and "Hallelujah! There's a Rainbow in the Sky." It wasn't reviewed.

In June, 1930, Dalhart, singing on an Imperial record as The Lone Star Ranger, got a fairly favorable review of "Eleven More Months and Ten More Days." This humorous number, written by Arthur Fields and Fred Hall, was one of the best of Dalhart's later offerings. It was combined with "Song of the Condemned," by the Radio Imps, Gerald Macy and Ed Smalle. By this time Mitchell's health had failed and Hubert S. Ryan had taken his place as the reviewer. Ryan said:

"The Song of the Condemned... is a little melodrama in itself, with a grim background and is most effectively done. The number on the reverse side is more conventional, but almost equally well rendered. This disc, unless I am much mistaken, is going to prove a tremendous success."

## PART VII

November, 1960

### I. Hill-Billies for Victor and Others

Despite the resentment which Victor's popular pianist, arranger, and conductor, Nat Shilkret, felt because he considered Dalhart had not sufficiently recognized his part in shaping "The Prisoner's Song" into a sensational success, the overwhelming success of record No. 19427 caused Dalhart to be called on for many other Victor hill-billy recordings.

There was a lapse of six months, however, between the appearance of "The Wreck of the Old 97" and

"The Prisoner's Song," in November, 1924, and Dalhart's next record of that type. Perhaps the lag was caused by the factory's efforts to catch up with the demand for the biggest selling vocal record made up to that time.

In May, 1925, Dalhart came through with "In the Baggage Coach Ahead," in which he was assisted by a male trio, and "I'll Ne'er Forget My Mother and My Home."

The supplement said: "A call has gone up all over the country for Dalhart to sing more popular songs of the old-time sort, like the 'Wreck of the Old 97.' Well, here are two more of them."

In June his version of "The Time Will Come" was coupled with "Way Down Home," by Gene Austin and Carson Robison. In July his admirers were pleased with "He Sure Can Play a Harmonica" and "Ain't You Comin' Out Tonight?" The supplement said the last was written jointly by Dalhart and Robison, although the tune was the same as "Buffalo Gals," which had been published almost 100 years before.

August brought two more Victor records by Dalhart. One appropriately coupled "The Runaway Train" and "The Chain Gang Song," and the other "A Boy's Best Friend Is His Mother" and "Many, Many Years Ago."

His records, mostly titles he was also singing for Edison, Columbia, Brunswick, and many other companies, continued to pop up regularly in Victor lists. They were both the Alpha and Omega, so to speak, of the May, 1926, supplement.

On page one, under the heading "A New Dramatic Dalhart Record," the editor said:

"Vernon Dalhart's record of 'The Prisoner's Song' is proving the best-selling vocal record in Victory history. Here is a new two-ballad record exhibiting weird crude power of appeal. 'The Governor's Pardon' is the night-vigil of a condemned man before the day set for death. To the monotonous ticking of the clock, the night-hours wear away. With morning comes not the expected death-warrant, but the Governor's pardon. The Engineer's Child tells of the wife who is to hang a red lamp in the window if her sick child dies; a green, if it lives. Her husband, thundering past in the night, sees the green light and all is well."

The last record in the supplement received this mention:

"As we begin this issue with Dalhart, we conclude with him. In this new trios (its first record), he appears as both vocalist and instrumentalist. The trio includes guitar, violin, flute, jew's harp, harmonica, and some interesting tricks. It has a waltz based on the familiar Floyd Collins ballad which Dalhart sang for us not long after this tragic event: this is coupled with a whirling swift reel, an almost ideal number for trick Charlestowners. Dalhart sings in both numbers. (The second side, of course, was 'Better Get Out of My Way,' by the group known as Dalhart's Texas Pan-handlers.)"

For many months afterward, Dalhart's Victor records continued to appear with little sign of a drop in popularity. Some of his best selling numbers, in fact, were still to come. But it would serve no useful purpose to list them all. Instead, I prefer to mention several unusual discs he made during the next few years.

"The Texas Tenor" was one of the few popular singers who sometimes sang songs that were long enough to take up both sides of a 10-inch disc. One of these was his Columbia of "The Bully Song," an irresistible "cooing shout" which Charles Trevathan had written for May Irwin in the 1890's. With its swinging refrain of "When I walk that levee round, round, round—" it is one of the best

records Dalhart ever made. The hill-billy tune, "Bully of the Town," is a corruption of Trevathan's old-time hit.

Another two-part disc which, in my opinion, has less to recommend it is "Tired of Mother," which Victor issued in June, 1928. The words of this dirge were written by a Wesleyan Methodist minister in High Point, N. C., and the music by another preacher of the same family name.

The author of the words published it himself. It is hard to understand how Dalhart could believe a record of such a mawkish affair, occupying two full sides, could sell well enough to make it a paying proposition.

The crude lyrics tell of a paralyzed, aged woman who was lifted off a train in the belief that her daughter would come to take care of her. When the daughter didn't show up, and evinced no interest in what became of her mother, the "unwanted mother" was taken to a hospital, where she died.

The author says he "cried and prayed" over this "true story" before putting words to paper, but his internal struggles did not inspire him to write literate English. Nevertheless, the number came to Dalhart's attention (probably the author sent him a copy of the sheet music) and he recorded it, smoothing out some of the limping lines and amateurish versification.

Its sale was small and did not add to Dalhart's popularity. The record was made after his break with Carson Robison, when he was increasingly harried to find good material.

Shortly before this, the name of Adelyne Hood, who had appeared in Edison tone tests with Dalhart as far back as 1917, began to be seen in Victor and other supplements. She had taken the place of Murray Kellner as Dalhart's violinist.

Her name was published in a Victor supplement for the first time in January, 1928, when she, Dalhart, and Robison sang and played "Sing On, Brother, Sing." (A little earlier Dalhart and Robison had sung refrains in dance records of "Shine On, Harvest Moon" and "On Mobile Bay," by the International Novelty Orchestra conducted by Nat Shilkret).

In March, the Dalhart-Robison-Hood trio had a big seller in "Oh! Susanna" coupled with Robison's beautiful composition, "When the Sun Goes Down Again," sung as a Dalhart-Robison duet. Miss Hood's incidental violin playing is exquisite.

### II. Charley Case's Songs

One of the most amusing double-faced records Vernon Dalhart ever made, and apparently one of the rarest and hardest to find, is his coupling of two mock-ballads written by the brilliant Negro comedian, Charley Case. One side was called "A Warning to Boys" and the other "A Warning to Girls." This appeared under Columbia's 50 cent Velvet Tone label as by Dalhart and as a Harmony record by "Mack Allen." It is amusing that "Mack Allen" was claimed as "an exclusive Harmony artist." Charley Case was a comedian of a high strung disposition, who always played with a piece of string while on the stage to give his nervous hands something to do. He made three Victor records around 1909-10, "Father as a Scientist," "Experiences in the Show Business" and "How Mother Made the Soup."

My vaudeville comedian friend, the late Joe Laurie, Jr., told me Case



VERNON DALHART  
at the peak of his recording career.

was born in Lockport, N. Y., his mother being a Negro of the Albino type and his father a white man of Irish descent. He died in the Palace Hotel on 45th Street in New York, in or about the year 1916, aged 58, and his wife, a full-blooded Negro woman, died of shock when she learned of his death.

He was cleaning a revolver when he was fatally shot. Although the shooting may have been an accident, Joe Lauric said Case was known to have brooded, and the general opinion of his associates was that the wound was intentional—a further example of the truism that the greatest comedians have their tragic side.

At any rate, Dalhart unearthed the two burlesque ballads with which Case convulsed his theater audiences, and recorded them with a mock solemnity to the accompaniment of an old-fashioned parlor organ, that is irresistibly funny. The words are worth reprinting, although to be appreciated to the fullest, they should be heard with the music. Here is the "Warning to Girls:"

"Homeward to her mother a working girl did come—  
Weary with her honest toil and lighted up with rum,  
Supper was not ready—she aimed a brutal blow,  
When the bright baby stopped her, saying 'Sister, don't do so!'  
Don't swat dear mother, girl, just 'cause she's old—  
Don't mop her face with the floor!  
Think how her love is a treasure of gold—  
Don't push her face through the door!  
Don't put the rocking chair next to her eye;  
Don't bounce the lamp off her bean!  
Angels are watching you up in the sky—  
Don't swat dear mother—it's mean!"

#### RECITATION:

"There was once a poor young girl who left her country home  
And came to the city to seek employment.  
She had to leave her home because the world was at the door  
And her father had fallen down and hurt his knee.  
Just before she went away her sweetheart, whose name was Jack, said to her, 'I fear you will not be true.'  
And so she had to promise him before she got on the train.  
That every night at 8 o'clock she would burst into tears.  
She came to the city and was riding on a street car.  
When a man got up and offered her

his seat, she refused the offer with scorn for she saw that he wore a ring  
And she did not know but that he might be a married man.  
Then up came the conductor and said 'I knew you would be true!'  
And tore off his false whiskers—and it was Jack!  
And that day she got a telegram saying that her father's knee was better, And an aunt had died and left her  
Fifty-eight thousand Dollars!"

And here is the "Warning to Boys:"

"There was once a poor young man who left his country home  
And came to the city to seek employment.  
He promised his dear mother that he'd lead the simple life  
And always shun the fatal curse of drink!  
He came to the city and accepted employment in a quarry.  
And while there he made the acquaintance of some college men.  
He little knew that they were demons, for they wore the best of clothes—  
But clothes do not always make the gentleman!  
One night he went out with his new-found friends to dine,  
And they tried to persuade him to take a drink.  
They tempted him, and tempted him, but he refused and he refused,  
Till finally he took a glass of beer!  
When he seen what he had done he dashed the liquor to the floor  
And staggered through the door with delirium tremens.  
While in the grip of liquor he met a Salvation Army fassie.  
And cruelly he broke her tambourine.  
All she said was 'Heaven bless you' and placed a mark upon his brow  
With a kick that she had learned before she was saved.  
So now, kind friends, take my advice and shun the fatal curse of drink  
And don't go around breaking people's tambourines!"

If you happen to run across a copy of this masterpiece of satire, be sure to acquire the record. It is worth having.

#### III. The Break With Carson Robison

A record dealer once told me of a visit he received just before Christmas of 1927 from a lanky, somewhat intoxicated, mountaineer. The rustic gentleman bought a dozen Dalhart records, all of them dealing with train wrecks, floods, earthquakes, murders, and similar tragic happenings, and all, of course, ending with a moral admonition, such as "Don't forget that the trip is a short one from this earth to that sweet promised land!"

As his records were being wrapped, the mountaineer explained they were a Christmas present "for the old woman and the kids." Said he: "The old woman and the kids will play these here sad pieces and cry their d-- fool heads off! With all this here mis'ry music they're sure gonna have one, h--- of a Merry Christmas!"

Most of those "sad pieces" were written by Carson Robison, who soon afterward parted company with Dalhart. I have a letter which Robbie wrote to me in October, 1951, explaining why they dissolved partnership.

It boiled down to two things. Robison resented Dalhart's bringing in the charming Adelyne Hood to replace Murray Kellner while he was on vacation. Robison objected even more strongly to Dalhart's insistence that he be "cut in" for half the sheet music and record royalties from Robison's songs. This was not an uncommon practice.

Many popular artists had their names published on sheet music as part writers of songs with which they had nothing to do, in order to share in the royalties, but one can easily sympathize with Robison's attitude. I shall quote part of his letter, but it should be remembered

that we have only his side of the story and Dalhart is not here to speak in his own defense:

"Dear Jim: . . . Dalhart . . . was a very difficult person to get along with. From the time I knew him until we split up, he had a continual chip on his shoulder and was suspicious of everyone. I grant that he had some tough breaks when he first got to New York from Texas, but who doesn't? I landed in New York with \$3.65 in the one good pocket of my only suit and for a long time I ate 35 cent spaghetti dinners on Eighth Avenue. But even after things really began to break for Dal he could still get over his bitterness at life. . . . When Dal and I split in 1928 I know he was worth between \$150,000 and \$200,000, and he told me one time that he was going to show them how to make some real money on the stock exchange—not knowing a thing about it, of course. . . . When we first got together in 1924 . . . he compelled me to give him one-third of the royalties I received on any song that he recorded, even if he only recorded it on one label. Then he finally tried to make me give him 50 per cent and that was the pay-off. When we split, practically every recording company . . . got in touch with me and offered to help me find a voice to replace him. In fact, Nat Shilkret offered to spend \$5,000 if necessary. . . ."



ADELYNE HOOD

"About Miss Hood, I knew practically nothing about her until he suddenly brought her to New York from Alabama to record with us, and he chose the time to bring her when I was out West on a vacation. I had worked for a long time with an excellent violinist, teaching him hill-billy style of 'fiddlin' and he had gotten really outstanding in this type of work and did all our dates with us . . . Naturally he felt that he was a part of the combination. Dalhart said

nothing to him about changing and nothing to me, and when I got back and found Miss Hood there the first thing I asked Dal was if he had told the old fiddler about it. His reply was, 'Why do I have to tell him anything?' Miss Hood was a charming person, but that actually was the beginning of the end with him and me. Without putting myself on the back, he lasted just about a year after we split due mainly to the lack of proper material to record. I had made a study of his ability and wrote accordingly and we had some terrific sellers together, but he didn't have one outstanding record after we split."

"The story of 'The Prisoner's Song' is a long one. . . Guy Massey . . . sang the song continually while he was visiting Dalhart in New York and when Dal and I were called by Victor to record 'Wreck of the Old 97,' Mr. (Eddie) King of Victor asked us if we had anything to put on the back of it. Dal told him about 'The Prisoner's Song,' which at that time was not even named, and told Mr. King there would be no royalty, as the song was public domain, as far as he knew. We recorded it and shortly afterwards Dal copyrighted the song in his name and stuck Victor for royalties.

As far as I can learn, he collected from Shapiro-Bernstein approximately \$85,000, which represented 95 per cent of all royalties. Guy Massey got five per cent and died in San Antonio a few years later practically penniless. In later years when Dal was doing everything he could to

get back on records, he was guest star on 'We, the People,' and I cringed when I heard him tell how he went home one night and composed 'The Prisoner's Song.' The man never composed a note of anything in his life. . . ."

And that is the late Carson Robison's version of his break-up with Dalhart. I dislike to give only one side of a controversy, but since Dalhart had died three years before this letter was written there was no way of quoting him in rebuttal.

Robison obtained Frank Luther as his singing partner (they made Victor records for a time under the names of Bud and Joe Billings) and went on to many other recording successes. In the 1930's he and his radio troupe known as Carson Robison and His Buckaroos went to England, were a big success on the stage, and made a large number of records.

In justice to Adelyne Hood, I should register my opinion that she was an excellent violinist, although certainly not a fiddler of the robust hill-billy style, and she also had a charming voice, which added much to many of Dalhart's records. Their Columbia duet of "The Frog Song," written by Thomas P. Westendorf, who composed "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen," is captivating.

She was also a brilliant comedienne, who (thanks perhaps to her Alabama background) could impersonate a Negro woman to the life, as her 1930 Columbia records of "Madam Queen" and "He's On the Chain Gang Now" reveal. (Dalhart takes the part of a police court judge in the latter.)

The last I heard of Miss Hood was 10 years or more ago when she was broadcasting as "Aunt Jane" each day from a Pittsburgh radio station. I have always admired her and hope she is still alive and happy.

#### IV. Dalhart in Decline

Judging by Robison's remarks about Dalhart's desire to show other people how to play the stock market, he probably invested heavily, and, like thousands of other unwary citizens, was virtually wiped out in the October, 1929, crash. It is difficult otherwise to account for his descent into comparative poverty.

Another hard blow for him was the shrinking of the record buying public to negligible proportions after 1929. If Robison had still been working with Dalhart the depression would have curtailed his sales, especially since hill-billy records were mostly bought by people of low incomes. Too, he and Miss Hood now had to battle the competition of more authentic hill-billy recorders such as Jimmy Rodgers, the Carter Family, and Riley Puckett.

Edison's departure from the record business was another blow. Dalhart kept plugging away, however, and made ingenious efforts to freshen the appeal of his records by introducing new effects, a jug band among them. Some of his last Victor and Columbia records, such as "Eleven More Months and Ten More Days" and "Low Bridge, Everybody Down!" would have been big sellers a few years before, but after the depression set in few "country cousins" felt they could spare 75 cents for such a luxury as a phonograph record.

Dalhart's name ceased to appear in both the Victor and Columbia supplements at about the same time in 1930. Occasionally, it might be seen in a Banner or some other cheap record list, but after 1931 he realized he was through.

## PART VII — Conclusion

December, 1960

### V. A Letter from Vernon Dalhart

The only letter I ever received from Dalhart was written after his recording career had come to a halt, but he still had an office at 120 West 45th Street, New York. The letter's tone certainly doesn't bear out my old friend Carson Robison's statement that Dalhart carried a chip on his shoulder and had a grudge toward everyone. Perhaps adversity had mellowed him. I thought, and still think, the letter he wrote in reply to one in which I expressed admiration for his work and hoped he would make more records, expressed a charming spirit of good will:

"My dear Mr. Walsh: Your delightful letter of September 1st received, and in reply will say that it was quite flattering, and I might add that we all have a failing (or falling) for flattery. It seems that you have covered about everything there is to say in regard to my association with the hill-billy records, except to express my sincere appreciation of how the dear public received my efforts.

I am sorry to learn that my efforts have in any way damaged my other artist, and this goes especially for Harry Whitter, as I liked him very much personally, as well as his recordings. (Note by Jim Walsh—I told Dalhart that Whitter had mentioned to me that Dalhart's records of 'The Wreck of the Old 97' had



### VERNON DALHART VOICE PLACING PROFESSIONAL COACHING

Bridgeport, Conn.

One of the last photos of Vernon Dalhart  
—Photo courtesy of Marion Hoffman,  
Valley Center, Kans.

Killed the sale of Whitter's Okeh version). "I have always claimed that the popularity of one singer or song helped others, as no one man could do them all. If some Whitter fan came in to buy one of his, a clever salesman might also show one of mine, and it goes both ways. The main thing is to get that customer."

"For your information, 'The Old 97' sales were nothing to compare (according to statistics) with 'The Prisoner's Song.' However, 'The Old 97' was the cause of 'The Prisoner's Song' in that it needed a tie-up, and I had 'The Prisoner's Song' up my sleeve, and of course it is history that 'The Prisoner's Song' gave me my first commercial break, and started a deluge of recordings for me along that line. You are probably more familiar with the rest of it than I."

So again assuring you of my sincere appreciation, I beg to remain yours very truly, VERNON DALHART."

### VI. A Brief Comeback

In May, 1934, Dalhart's name startled his former admirers by appearing once more in the Brunswick list. It isn't clear whether he had been called on to re-record two of his former numbers or whether they

had been salvaged from the vaults and reissued, but judging from a comment in the *Music Lovers Guide* for that month it was most likely the latter:

"Brunswick and Victor each dug up a couple of popular old-timers for re-issue. On Victor 2477, Gene Austin (once a best-selling crooner) now almost forgotten repeats his dulcet versions of 'My Blue Heaven' and 'Ramona,' which in the original pressings probably sold well into a million copies. Brunswick's Dalhart does masterly hill-billy versions of those masterpieces of melancholy, 'The Prisoner's Song' and 'The Letter Edged in Black,' both done with neat fiddle and git-gar accompaniments (Brunswick 6799—a bit of Americana well worth investigation.)"

I should have mentioned, when I was discussing Dalhart's Victor recordings, that in 1926 he re-made his original acoustical versions of "The Prisoner's Song" and "The Wreck." But, even though they were done over electrically, the same number, 19427, was retained—I suspect because either Dalhart or Victor was superstitious about its "magic" qualities.

In the early 1930's he was called on to make a still better electrical version of "The Wreck," which was coupled on a 35 cent Bluebird record with "Sourwood Mountain," sung by a group called The Vagabonds. And still later "The Wreck" and "The Prisoner" were combined on Bluebird No. B-10578. I haven't heard the record, but suspect it is taken from the 1926 Victor masters.

During the 1950's these undying mountain music classics were included as part of a long-play record featuring outstanding examples of "Americana." Gene Austin and Jimmie Rodgers were the other artists.

In 1939 I was surprised and delighted when Dalhart began making a new series of records for Bluebird. I wrote him a letter expressing my pleasure that he was again recording and hoping his new venture would be successful.

He wrote a postal card in reply, thanking me graciously, but I have been unable to find it. The records were listed as by Vernon Dalhart and His Big Cypress Boys—the Big Cypress coming from the bayou by that name near his home town of Jefferson, Tex.

There were three of the Bluebird records, which marked Dalhart's final appearance in the hill-billy recording field: B-8170, combining "Johnnie Darlin'" and "You'll Never Take Away My Dreams;" B-8191, "My Mary Jane" and "Don't Cry, Little Sweetheart, Don't Cry;" and B-8229, "Lavender Cowboy" and "Dear Little Darling, Don't Forget Me."

They were unsuccessful, and when I heard them I could understand why. They were so over-amplified it was almost impossible to recognize the voice as Dalhart's. There was an edgy baritonal quality that changed it out of all resemblance to the real thing. No wonder they didn't sell.

### VII. Descent Into Obscurity

From that time, Dalhart's life and activities became more and more obscure. I have told about meeting Carson Robison and the late Bob Miller in 1948 and asking if they knew what had become of Dalhart, but neither did.

The year before, on November 26, 1947, I had received a letter from Bob, in which he said: . . . "I have made every effort to locate Vernon Dalhart, but have been unable to do so. The last that anyone seems to know of him was living in Larchmont, N. Y. During the war he worked in a war plant, and I cannot find anyone who knows his present whereabouts. . . If I am able to locate him in the near future I most certainly will let you know."

Dalhart had recorded many of Miller's compositions, and I found it depressing that Dalhart had dropped so completely out of sight even Bob could not find him. When I learned he was living in Bridgeport at the time of his death, I imagined the war plant probably was in Bridgeport, and that after his defense work ended he took the job of night clerk in the Barnum Hotel which his death certificates indicated he held when he died.

I might mention that a student of folk and hill-billy records, Joe Dronetz, of Minneapolis, who called on me not long ago, told me he happened to be in Bridgeport in 1948, learned Dalhart was in the Bridgeport General Hospital and went in to see him.

He was unable, however, to reconcile the varying stories the then elderly singer told about the origin of "The Prisoner's Song" and some of his other records. Joe said many collectors consider Dalhart's singing of hill-billy numbers for the smaller recording firms as generally poor, but I disagree.

The recording often was not what it should be, but it seems to me that Dalhart always was a true artist who tried just as hard to make a good record when he was singing, say, for Grey Gull, or Cameo as he did when recording for Edison, Victor, Columbia, Okeh or Brunswick. But on occasion it was unmistakable that he was overworked.

During the late 1920's a writer in the New York Times Sunday magazine expressed the opinion that records by Vernon Dalhart would be eagerly collected by future generations for the light they shed on American folk ways in the earlier years of this century. Time apparently is in the process of vindicating that writer's judgment.

It is easy to tell, from correspondence I have received since beginning this seven-part series about Dalhart, that there are a large number of collectors who are eagerly seeking his records, and I believe that number will steadily increase as the available supply begins to dwindle. Only today I received a letter saying Dalhart admirers are circulating a petition to have RCA Victor issue a long-playing record of some of his old numbers.

Like the rest of us, Marion Try Slaughter may have had his faults as a person, but he was a genuine artist in whatever type of musical activity he undertook. It is because I believe him to have been one of the most important pioneer recording artists, that I have devoted more space to his life story than I have given to any other one performer about whom I so far have written.

### ADDENDA

#### *Is 'The Prisoner's Song' An Old Scotch Folk Tune?*

Apparently the controversy over the origin of "The Prisoner's Song" never will end. Late in September, several months after my complete manuscript of the Vernon Dalhart series had been submitted to HOBIES, I received the following interesting letter from Mr. Robert Williamson, of 205 Brook St., Peterborough, Ontario, Canada:

"In 1924, at the age of 19, I came to Canada from Scotland with my father's family. In the fall of 1925, while teaching in northern Saskatchewan, I heard 'The Prisoner's Song' (probably Vernon Dalhart). Home for Christmas, I was singing this song around the house when I was rebuked by my mother. 'Sing the song right,' she said. I was surprised, but still more surprised when mother sang the song from beginning to end in the broad Doric Scots.

This was a song she had known when she was young. She had learned it at least before her marriage in 1901.

"It seemed to me at the time that the ease and fluency of the words and phrasing showed that the words had originally been written in Scots; but I am no longer sure of this. Sometimes translations can be excellent. . . I did not copy the Scots words, and mother and dad and their contemporaries are all long gone. . . I have no connections in the Old Country to help to dig up these words.

"In a situation such as this the question must be raised: 'Who is fooling whom?' I assure you I am not fooling and unquestionably my mother was not playing a trick. We are not a family of practical jokers. However, I thought that even with no evidence beyond my statement you would be interested in knowing that the words and melody of 'The Prisoner's Song' go back at least to the turn of the century."

Mr. Williamson's letter gives students of folk music another problem on which to exercise their ingenuity. Meanwhile, I am reminded by a letter from the Kansas collector of Dalhart records, Marion Hoffman, of something I wrote in an early installment, praising the tenor's Edison record of "Can't Yo' Heah Me Callin' Caroline?" Mr. Hoffman corresponded with Dalhart for years, and he quotes him as saying: "The first real recording of my voice was 'Caroline,' which I made for Mr. Edison." This shows that Dalhart had a low opinion of the Emerson and Columbia records he had previously made and did not consider them reproductions of his voice. In the same vein, Christine Miller, who made records for both Victor and Edison, wrote to Mr. Edison, "You have made the only true records of my voice." And when a Victor dealer told her he had some of her records and asked her to give a "tone test" with them, such as she gave for Edison, she replied: "You have no records of my voice. My name is on the label, but the voice is not mine." — o —

Since this series was completed, Marion Hoffman, of Valley Center, Kans., has sent me a folder issued by Dalhart during his later years in Bridgeport. It contains probably one of the last photographs taken of the singer, who was offering his services in voice placing and professional coaching. (See beginning of this installment).

The folder describes Dalhart as having been a leading tenor in these operas: *Trovatore*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Faust*, *Pagliacci*, *Butterfly*, *Aida*, *Bohemian Girl*, and *Girl of the Golden West*; oratorios—*Holy City*, *Messiah*, *Elijah*, *Persian Garden*, *Stabat Mater*, and *Rose Maiden*; and light operas—*Pinafore*, *Gondoliers*, *Spring Maid*, *Fencing Master*, *The Mikado*, *Naughty Marietta*, *Paul Jones*, and *The Merry Widow*.

There was also a page of critical comment. The Boston American, for instance, had described Dalhart as "a remarkably fine tenor;" the New York Sun said "he has a charming voice and knows how to use it," and Alan Dale, in the New York American, said he "sang with purity and clarity and his voice floated easily over the Hippodrome."

Incidentally, either because of typographical errors or my own typewriting slips, there were two mistakes involving dates in the August installment. In one place the year of Guy Massey's death is given as 1936 instead of 1926. And the photo of Carson Robison was sent to me in 1950 instead of 1940.

J. W.



POLK MILLER

## POLK MILLER AND THE OLD SOUTH QUARTETTE

By Doug Seroff

Polk Miller of Richmond, Virginia, was a successful white businessman who at the age of forty-eight embarked on a career as lecturer/entertainer and gained a wide reputation as a "delineator of the old Virginia plantation negro." Miller's entertainment consisted of an evening of stories, songs, and dialect recitations designed to evoke "Old Times Down South." From 1893 until at least 1899 Miller traveled widely and successfully. He was considered a master of the "nigger banjo" [sic; apologies] and had made a life-long study of black folk song and dialect. His entertainment career reached a certain high point in February, 1894, when at Twain's request he made an unscheduled appearance at Madison Square Garden with Mark Twain, James Whitcomb Riley, and Douglass Sherrley. The enthusiastic reception Miller received greatly enhanced his growing reputation.

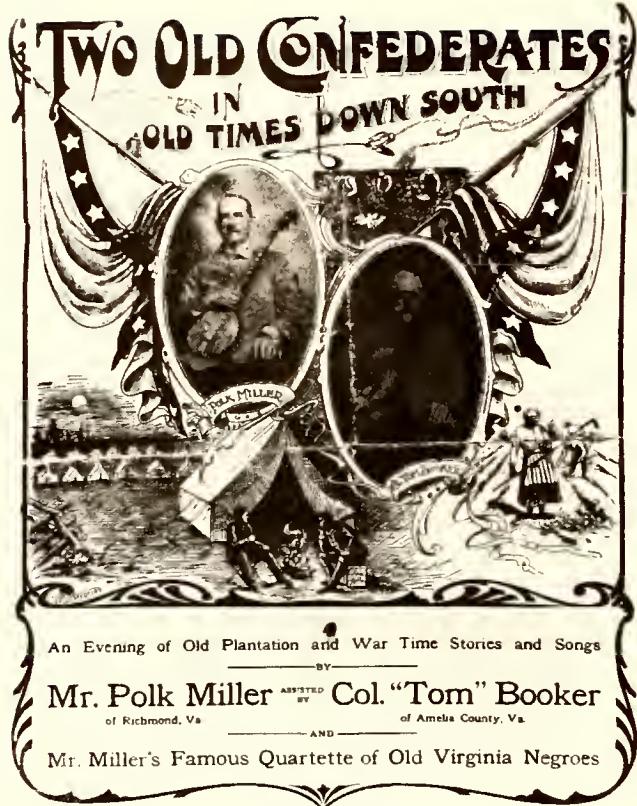
Shortly after 1899, Miller took an unusual and rather courageous step by adding a black vocal quartet from Richmond to his act; they were dubbed the Old South Quartette. Miller's ostensible purpose in carrying the quartet with him was "to illustrate my work." Miller is quoted in the *Richmond Journal* (3 January 1912): "I have had about twenty men in all since I first began to use a negro quartette. I could get a dozen quartettes from the good singing material among the Negroes in the tobacco factories here."<sup>1</sup> The same account claims Miller assembled the Old South Quartette from men in "various places of work...who had been singing on the street corners and barrooms of the city [Richmond] at night." However, it is likely that Polk Miller took on an already established quartet from Richmond's black community rather than organized the group himself.

Polk Miller and his Old South Quartette appeared in "the most exclusive social clubs in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh and Cleveland. The universities, colleges, military schools in most parts of the North and South have been visited...He [Miller] has been to the Waldorf-Astoria four times, Carnegie Hall in New York, and to Mendelssohn Hall in New York for Bishop Potter."<sup>2</sup>

It is also reported that "Mark Twain heard Miller and his Negro quartet during the time that Prince Henry of Prussia was visiting the country and wrote: 'I think that Prince Henry in being

out West and not hearing Polk Miller and his wonderful four in Carnegie Hall last night missed about the only thing the country can furnish that is originally and utterly American. Possibly it can furnish something that is more enjoyable but I must doubt it until I forget that pair of musical earthquakes "The Watermelon Song" and "Old Dan Tucker."<sup>3</sup>"

Polk Miller and his Old South Quartette recorded seven remarkably exciting cylinders for the Edison Company in 1910 (see discography at end of this article). The group's recorded repertoire included spirituals and secular plantation melodies. The Old South Quartette is probably very representative of what Richmond's community-based quartet groups sounded like at the turn of the century. Their harmony is unusually fine, and their bass singer (according to *The New Phonogram* he is James L. Stamper) is outstanding. For some reason this group is not well known among collectors of race music. The 1910 Edison session information was not included in either of the first two editions of Godrich & Dixon's *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942*.<sup>4</sup> Two titles the group recorded in 1910 are songs which Miller performed in his days as negro delineator. These are "The Bonnie Blue Flag" which was reported to be "perhaps the only complete version ever waxed of the Southern war song," and "Rise and Shine." *The New Phonogram* credits the group's bass singer James L. Stamper with composing "The Watermelon Song."<sup>5</sup> Public pressure forced Polk Miller to abandon his quartet in January, 1912. Miller made the following explanation to a *Richmond Journal* reporter: "There is a deep-seated, cruel and foolish prejudice in the North...against the negro as a race of people. Some of the Northern towns which wanted me would write, 'We are exceedingly anxious to have you, but our people don't want the quartette, as our people do not like the negro.' There is a certain class of whites in the South...this class of people made it very uncomfortable for my negroes. My solicitude for the comfort of my men, and many times for the safety of them in going from the halls to their quarters worried me very much. The inborn dislike of the negro on the part of the hoodlum element intensified my troubles when on the road and in some places I had to call on the police force to guard my men. The better class of white people knew that I used these negroes for a purpose--to illustrate my work...but the commoner classes could not understand why Polk



### GENUINE NEGROES

*They Look, Act, and Sing Like the "Old Times"*

WITH a view to giving the general public a true and faithful reproduction of Plantation Life and Scenes before the War, Mr. Polk Miller, of Virginia, who is recognized as the very best and truest singer of Southern life and character, has a very decided style of voice and drilled for the purpose, a quartette of the best Negro singers ever heard on the platform. They are taken from the Tobacco Factories of Richmond, Virginia, and, as types of his subject, could not be improved on. Their singing is not of the kind that has been heard by the students from "Colored Universities," who dress in pigeon-tailed coats, patent leather shoes, and hats, and who affect to sing "Plaintive Melodies" but do not. They do not try to set you in how they are a Negroes in the South, but while parading in a dark skin, but they dress art and sing like the real Southern Negroes in his "workin'" clothes. As to their voices, they are the sweet, though uncultivated, result of nature, producing a harmony unequalled by the professionals, and because it is natural, goes straight to the hearts of the people. To the old Southerner it will be "Sounds from the Old Home of Long Ago." To others who know a good Plantation Life, it will bring back all the pleasure and Edification of Past Days. Songs worked in between songs will come the Dialect Songs and Recitation of Mr. Poet, "Mickey" Co., "Tom" Booker, which are bits of Folk Lore, giving the characteristics of the Old Southern Darkies, which are as true to life as are the poems of Riley on the Hoosier of Indiana and is a combination of the Pathetic and humorous. To hear them is to live again your happy days *Down on the Farm*.

Exclusive Direction of  
Barber's Entertainment Bureau  
Washington, D. C.



Miller, who posed as a gentleman, could bring a lot of 'niggers' there to entertain white people."<sup>6</sup>

Dismissing the quartet caused Miller a great deal of anguish and disappointment--he took the opportunity to quit the platform and concert stage. Polk Miller died in October, 1913.

When Miller divested himself of the Old South Quartette he did not simply disband the group. Instead, in his own words, he "farmed them out to a New York man for five weeks. He was so much pleased with them that he has taken them for good and all, for which I am profoundly grateful."<sup>7</sup>

A great deal remains to be learned about the Old South Quartette. We have yet to discover the identity of the "New York man" that took over the group in 1912. It is disturbing that the quartet's personnel at any given time is not known. The most astonishing enigma surrounding the Old South Quartette concerns their sudden reappearance in Long Island City ca. August, 1928, where they recorded a second time; on this occasion for the QRS Record Company. The recordings from this later session are incredibly similar to the 1910 session recordings! Apparently the style and repertoire of the Old South Quartette did not change at all over the eighteen year interim! Two of the songs recorded in 1910 were recorded again at the 1928 session; these are "The Water-melon Song" and "The Laughing Song," the latter recorded again in 1928 as "Oysters & Wine at 2 A.M."<sup>8</sup> Song arrangements employed in 1928 are almost identical to the 1910 versions. I am certain that one or more of the members present on the 1910 session were still with the quartet in 1928.

#### Polk Miller's Scrapbooks

In his 1960 *Hobbies* article, Jim Walsh reprinted letters which he had received in late 1951 from Mrs. Virginia Miller Chewning, the daughter of Polk Miller. In one of these letters Mrs. Chewning mentioned that she had "scrapbooks of programs" which had originally belonged to Polk Miller. On a trip through Richmond in late 1980, Ray Funk discovered that Mrs. Chewning was

no longer living, and traced the scrapbooks to Polk Miller's grandson Alexander Neal of Richmond. I visited Mr. Neal in Richmond during the Summer of 1981 and he was kind enough to allow me to borrow these scrapbooks so that I could study and copy them at my leisure. During the period in which I was in possession of these scrapbooks the Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center in Nashville, Tennessee, microfilmed the entire contents, and the film is now part of their permanent collection. Mr. Neal had expressed the desire to donate the original scrapbooks to the Valentine Museum in Richmond. My thanks to Mr. Alexander Neal for his kind cooperation.

I borrowed three scrapbooks from Mr. Neal. These were assembled by Polk Miller during the 1890s, when he was touring on his own, before he began traveling with the Old South Quartette. Unfortunately, only a few remnants of the later period with the quartet are preserved here. The varied contents of the scrapbooks include numerous press clippings and reportorial comments concerning Miller's stage appearances; handbills, advertising placards, program booklets, printed invitations, endorsements, and personal correspondences. There are a number of general newspaper features, some written by Miller, concerning the ante-bellum South, and some of Miller's dialect stories are reprinted in lengthy newspaper articles. There is an original Polk Miller song composition entitled "Rhonda Ragland" transcribed in long-hand, and there are program bills for several contemporaries of Miller's, along with a considerable amount of miscellany relating to Miller's drug business, his interest in hunting, veterinary medicine, etc. In many cases printed items are accompanied by handwritten comments from Miller's pen. Finally, there are three retrospective articles about Polk Miller from Richmond newspapers dated 1935, 1950, and 1955.

I would enjoy hearing from anyone researching a related subject, or anyone with an interest in the scrapbook material described above.

--Goodlettsville, Tennessee



#### NOTES

1. *Richmond Journal* (3 January 1912). My thanks to Lynn Abbott, who located and copied this illuminating reference.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Unknown Richmond newspaper article, 1935. From a retrospective about Polk Miller. A portion of this quote also appears in *The New Phonogram* (March 1910). The original printed source is not known.
4. Details of Polk Miller And His Old South Quartette 1910 Edison recording session do appear in the new third edition of *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1943* (1982).

5. Jim Walsh, "Polk Miller And His Old South Quartet," *Hobbies* (January 1960). A lengthy description and discography of Polk Miller's Edison recording session is reprinted from the March, 1910, edition of *The New Phonogram* in Jim Walsh's excellent article. Walsh also reprints a biographical sketch of Polk Miller written by his son, the late Withers Miller. This article is recommended to anyone interested in further readings about Miller.
6. *Richmond Journal* (3 January 1912).
7. *Ibid.*
8. The marvelous lyrics to "Oysters and Wine at 2 A.M." are reprinted from *The New Phonogram* in Jim Walsh's article in *Hobbies* (January 1960).

→ ←

#### DISCOGRAPHY

##### Polk Miller and His Old South Quartette

Male vocal quartet, including James L. Stamper, bass, other unknown. Polk Miller, lead -1; guitar accompaniment -2; banjo accompaniment -3; unaccompanied -4.

Recorded early 1910 (all sides were released in March 1910).

"The Bonnie Blue Flag" -1; -3	Edison Amberole 389
"Laughing Song" -2	Edison Amberole 390
"What a Time" -2	Edison Amberole 391
"The Watermelon Party" -2	Edison Amberole 392
"Rise & Shine" -1; -2	Edison 10332
"The Old Time Religion" -1; -4	Edison 10333
"Jerusalem Mornin'" -1; -4	Edison 10334

##### Old South Quartette

Male vocal quartet, with guitar or banjo accompaniment -1. (Master numbers in parentheses)

Long Island City, August 1928

"Oh What He's Done for Me" -1	QRS R7025 (157-A)
"Oysters and Wine at 2 A.M."	QRS R7006
"Pussy Cat Rag"	QRS R7006, Broadway 5031 (164-A)
"Watermelon Party"	QRS R7029 (159)
"When de Corn Pone's Hot"	QRS R7029 (166-A)
unknown title*	QRS (?), Broadway 5031 (162-A)
"No Hiding Place Down Here"	QRS R7025 (168)

\*Broadway 5031, the reverse of "Pussy Cat Rag" is mistitled "Oysters and Wine at 2 A.M." I own a copy of Broadway 5031. Mx. 162-A is definitely by the Old South Quartette, but it is not identical to "Oysters and Wine at 2 A.M." or any of the other titles listed above, all of which I have heard.

##### References

Godrich & Dixon, *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942*

*The New Phonogram* (March 1910)--as reprinted in *Hobbies* (January 1960).

## TEX ATCHISON: FANCY FIDDLING AND FANCY SINGING

By Gerald F. Vaughn

*[This article is based in part on letters, tapes, and phone conversations between the author and Tex Atchison. Though Atchison had a review copy of the first draft several months prior to his death (August, 1982), his failing health prevented him from providing corrections, additions, etc. The article is published by permission of his daughter, but any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the author.]*

One of the foremost musicians in the rise and peak popularity of western swing was Shelby "Tex" Atchison. Atchison was born in Rosine, Kentucky, 5 February 1912, the son of Eugene G. and Martha Ann Atchison. His father was one of the best fiddlers around Ohio County, Kentucky. At age eight Tex Atchison began playing his dad's fiddle, and by age fourteen was playing fiddle, saxophone, and clarinet in the band of Forrest "Boots" Faught. Faught's band combined old-time country music with Dixieland jazz and was regarded as innovative for the region at that time. Atchison eventually became proficient on the guitar also, as well as playing acceptable banjo and mandolin. His late brother Birtie, who picked banjo, was the only other musician in the family.

Atchison was left handed, and the arguments will probably never be resolved as to whether he or Joe Holley was the greatest left-handed fiddler in the history of western swing. Most left-handed fiddlers change the strings to accommodate their playing, but both Atchison and Holley were unique in that they did not. Bob Wills tried to lure Atchison into his band so that, together with Joe Holley, who was already in the group, the Wills band would have this double distinction.

Atchison made his radio debut at WGBF in Evansville, Indiana, and then moved to WOC in Davenport, Iowa. While at WOC he helped organize the group which later became the Prairie Ramblers, and in the 1930s were almost as popular as Bob Wills's band or the Sons of the Pioneers. The Prairie Ramblers began as the Kentucky Ramblers, performing more in the style of a Southeastern string band. As their music took on a western swing flavor, "Kentucky" changed to "Prairie." The original Prairie (or Kentucky) Ramblers were Tex Atchison, Charles "Chick" Hurt, Jack Taylor, and Floyd "Salty" Holmes—all boyhood friends from Kentucky. Five months after the group was formed, they went to Chicago and became regulars on the WLS National Barn Dance program, which was then the chief rival to the Grand Ole Opry. At that time (the fall of 1932) the National Barn Dance featured a line-up of top talent, perhaps the most notable being young Gene Autry. While in

Chicago, Atchison entered and won the National Fiddlers Championship at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, playing on Henry Ford's \$25,000 Stradivarius.

In the early 1930s the Prairie Ramblers played back-up for Gene Autry recordings, and Atchison eventually backed 103 sides for Autry. When Autry left Chicago for Hollywood and required a full-time fiddle player, he offered the job to Atchison, who, unfortunately, had to decline due to other commitments. In 1933, the Prairie Ramblers made their own first recordings for the Victor label in Chicago.

The Prairie Ramblers shifted locations briefly, spending the latter part of 1934 and the first half of 1935 at WOR in New York City. They then returned to WLS and the National Barn Dance and achieved added renown with a new member—Patsy Montana. The Prairie Ramblers recorded some memorable hits, including "Riding Down the Canyon" and "Nobody's Darling but Mine," and they cut their hottest swing sides while in New York City. Their 1936 recording of "I Wanna be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" with Patsy Montana singing and yodeling became the first million-seller by a female country singer. On Gene Autry's recommendation, the group had changed labels and begun recording for the American Record Company. Few groups in either "hillbilly," "cowboy," or "western swing" music matched the quality, both on record and in person, that was demonstrated by the Prairie Ramblers in 1936.

In 1937 Atchison decided the time was right for him to pursue a career as a single performer, and from 1937 to 1941 he appeared on WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, and WMBD in Peoria, Illinois.

California beckoned to Atchison in the early 1940s, as it did to other country musicians. The movie, radio, recording, and western dance band opportunities to be found there were irresistible. After arriving in Los Angeles, he joined the staff of KPAS in Pasadena (later changed to KXLA), an association he continued for many years even as his career expanded in every direction. It was only when the many demands became impossible

to meet that he reluctantly quit performing at that station.

Uncle Sam also beckoned to Atchison, and after thirteen months in the Navy during World War II, he returned to California. His first important career advance came when he joined the western dance band of Ray Whitley. He recalled that Whitley's band could outdraw Spade Cooley's or any other band in Los Angeles at that time. He eventually worked with some of the finest western dance bandleaders in Southern California--Ray Whitley, Spade Cooley, Ole Rasmussen, Deuce Spriggen, Red Murrell, Jimmy Wakely, and Merle Travis among others.



Tex Atchison (far right) with Ray Whitley's Rhythm Wranglers. Others identifiable include Tex Ann Nation (far left), Ray Whitley, Al Dexter (guest artist), Muddy Berry (drums), and Merle Travis (seated to right of Atchison).

While he was working with Ray Whitley's band, Atchison was asked by Foy Willing to become a member of the Riders of the Purple Sage. The Riders at that time had just signed to do thirteen weeks on radio with the Andrew Sisters on their network program, "Eight to the Bar Ranch." Both Atchison and Whitley felt that it was an opportunity too good for him to pass up, so in 1945 Atchison joined the Riders of the Purple Sage.

The Riders of the Purple Sage then consisted of Foy Willing (baritone and guitar), Al Sloey (tenor and bass), Jimmy Dean (lead singer), and Art Wenzel (accordion). The addition of Atchison's fiddle playing strengthened the Riders instrumentally. With the sudden passing of Jimmy Dean in 1945, Atchison became the lead singer. He can be heard singing lead on a number of the Riders' best-selling recordings, although on "No One to Cry To" (on the Majestic label) Al Sloey was changed to lead, while Atchison sang baritone.

Following a successful stint on the Andrew Sisters radio program, the Riders of the Purple Sage appeared in Las Vegas with the Andrew Sis-

ters for what was booked as a six-week engagement, but was held over an additional four weeks--the Andrew Sisters were hotter than a two-dollar pistol about then, and so were the Riders of the Purple Sage.

In Los Angeles just after the War, Atchison became to the fiddle what Merle Travis was to the guitar. Atchison was number one fiddler on call at both the Columbia and Capitol record companies, backing many of the top artists from Jimmy Wakely to Marty Robbins. During this time he also did a lot of session work for the Four-Star label. Atchison recalled that some fine club or dance musicians would "freeze up" at a recording session, so he became one of the only thirty or forty musicians who did most of the session work around Los Angeles.

He was also active as a musician in over thirty western movies, appearing with stars including Charles Starrett, Ken Curtis, and Jimmy Wakely, as well as leading his own band in a Lum and Abner movie at RKO.

In 1946 Atchison was featured daily on two KXLA Pasadena shows ("Harmony Homestead" and "Dinnerbell Roundup Time") along with such artists as Cliffie Stone, Merle Travis, Smokey Rogers, and Tex Ann Nation. He was on KFWB's "Western Stars" show with some of the same people. Saturday nights he appeared on KNX's "Hollywood Barn Dance," a network program on the West Coast.

In April 1946 Atchison was named winner of the *Tophand Magazine Fiddler Award*, and also that year won the Los Angeles Champion Fiddler competition at the Los Angeles Coliseum (as well as in 1948). Also during 1946 he performed three times as a guest on the vastly popular Armed Forces Radio Service program "Command Performance." He has the distinction, too, of being the first country music artist to appear on Ginny Simms's radio show, fiddling one selection and singing a second. In 1947 he fronted his own western dance band, appearing four nights a week at the Painted Post in North Hollywood, California.

In the mid and late forties Atchison began recording as a solo on the Victory, Belltone, and King labels, and later on the Imperial and Sage & Sand labels. "Somebody's Rose" for King was perhaps his biggest hit. In *Tophand's* review of his Victory sides "Come My Love and Go With Me" / "If You Must Cry Over Someone," we have this appraisal:

Tex Atchison, one of the best fiddlers in the business comes through with two nice sides. Tex is well known from coast to coast and his records should do very well...Tex's singing and fiddling both show up very well. [Vol 1, No 3, June 1946]

More than as a recording artist, Tex Atchison will be remembered first as a superb fiddler and second as a member of two major vocal groups--the Prairie Ramblers and the Riders of the Purple

Sage. But not far behind will be his important songwriting accomplishments, somewhat overshadowed by his fancy fiddling and fancy singing.

All together Atchison wrote several hundred songs of which about ninety-seven have been recorded. He collaborated with writers such as Johnny Bond, Merle Travis, Ray Whitley, and others. His song "Sleepy Eyed John" sold well over a million records as recorded by Johnny Horton. He wrote "Old Kentucky Fox Chase," recorded by Red Foley, and "Sick, Sober, and Sorry," recorded by Johnny Bond, who published many of Atchison's compositions and recorded fourteen of them. Bond and Atchison jointly wrote "Three Sheets in the Wind." Other Atchison compositions include "Honky-Tonkitis," recorded by Carl and Pearl Butler; "We're Gonna Go Fishin'," recorded by Hank Locklin (which went to number one in Denmark); "When You Cry You Cry Alone," recorded by Glen Campbell; "Crocodile Tears," recorded by Doris Day; and "Honky Tonk Hardwood Floor," recorded by Kay Starr.

Much of Tex's activity around Los Angeles was with his close friend Merle Travis. Both he and Travis became key members of the Rhythm Wranglers, the wartime dance band of Ray Whitley; and both had come west from the coal fields of Kentucky. Travis and Atchison roomed together for a couple of years and worked a lot of recording sessions together, collaborated on several songs, and appeared together on many radio programs. It was a lasting friendship that each cherished. But their crowning glory as a team may have been when they worked thirteen weeks on the popular "Dr. Christian" radio series--as actors.

As western swing began to wane in Southern California in the early 1950s, Atchison kept busy with his many recording sessions. He also formed a group called the Saddle Kings, consisting of himself on fiddle, Jimmie Widener on guitar, and Hank Caldwell on bass. They sang trio harmony and, augmented by background musicians Ernie Tavares on steel and Frankie Messina on accordion, were regulars on Redd Harper's "Hollywood Roundup" radio show for the Armed Forces Radio Service.

Atchison backed Tex Ritter on some of Ritter's Snader telescriptions, one of which is shown continuously at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. Later Atchison formed the Wagoneers, a trio consisting of Deuce Spriggen, Ace Spriggen, and himself. And into more current times, Atchison worked with Jimmie Davis for a couple of winters.

In semi-retirement and living in Kentucky near his birthplace, Atchison often performed at music festivals in the area. He did music arranging for a few friends who were still active in recording.

Thinking about that wealth of musical talent active in California in the 1940s, creating sounds almost beyond their fondest dreams, Atchison reflected especially on the western dance bands. His fondness for the band of Ray Whitley is apparent in this statement by Atchison:

Any band could draw at Venice Pier, Town Hall, or Baldwin Park, but only Ray's band could draw well at the Plantation in Culver City. The other dancehalls had an amusement park or good location or something else that added to the attraction. The Plantation had nothing around it. The people who came there were attracted by the band alone. Foreman Phillips's idea was to put his best draw, Ray's band, in his weakest hall...and it worked.

Ray's band was a combination of great dance band and great show band. Musically there was none better to dance to. It had musicians like Merle Travis, Vic Davis, Noel Boggs, Joaquin Murphy, Muddy Berry, Frankie Marvin, Slim Duncan, Art West, Art Wenzel, Al Tonkins, and other top talents when I was working with the band, and outstanding singers like Ruby Morgan, and Tex Ann Nation. We all did a lot of gags, and we had a real funny guy in Sleepy Carson. Ray would go along with any gag. So the crowd could dance or just watch, whatever they pleased.

There were no deadheads in Ray's band. We were all smiles and moving around. And time just flew on the bandstand. We had so much fun...the musicians I mean...and the crowd could tell it. I always looked forward to coming to work, which wasn't true in some bands. I was very sorry to have to leave Ray's band, but I recommended a good replacement--Harold Hensley.

Ray Whitley, who passed away in 1979, is best remembered as a singing cowboy in the movies and for his western songwriting, including the classic "Back in the Saddle Again," Gene Autry's theme song. Ray was also a versatile stage performer, radio/TV/recording artist, creator of the Gibson J-200 guitar series, and the man who guided Fred Rose into country music. Ray was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in October 1981.

Atchison felt strongly that Whitley should also be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame:

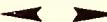
Ray was a great great entertainer. He had more friends than any man I ever knew. Ray Whitley has got to be in the Country Music Hall of Fame. Ray deserved to be in there a long time ago, way ahead of a lot of them who are in there now. I don't mean they don't belong. It's just that Ray should have gone in ahead.

The Ray Whitley dance band did not receive widespread attention outside Los Angeles because unfortunately they never recorded commercially. Atchison also worked in the Deuce Spriggen's band that began in mid-1945 and ended by mid-1946.

Tex Atchison passed away 4 August 1982. He was living in Collinsville, Illinois, in the home of his daughter, Joy, and her husband, Norris M. Silvey, both of whom are Christian ministers. A

year earlier, in August 1981, Atchison had donated his 1884 Knopf fiddle to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. This is the fiddle he used during most of his career. "We're very glad to get it," a museum spokesman said in a press release. "It's an early fiddle and, believe it or not, we don't have too much from the early years of western swing." With the famous fiddle to Tex Atchison on display, not much more is needed.

--Newark, Delaware



Tex Atchison and his Saddle Kings as regulars on Redd Harper's AFRS program "Hollywood Roundup" (1951). (l to r:) Ernie Tavares, Jimmie Widener, Ray Whitley (guest artist), Tex Atchison, Frankie Messina, Redd Harper, Hank Caldwell, Frank Seeley (producer).



The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville, TN, receives Tex Atchison's 1884 Knopf fiddle, which he used throughout most of his career (1981). (l to r:) Bill Ivey, Director, CMF; Tex Atchison; Charlie Seemann, Curator of Collections for the Hall of Fame and Museum.

## MICHAEL ADAMS'S HONKY-TONK PAINTINGS

By Archie Green

Michael Adams, painting in Austin during 1977-1979, caught in oils the neon glow of the Texas honkytonk, its compulsive drinkers/dancers, and their lurid music. His many canvasses serve as vignettes for the best of Willie Nelson's songs. John Travolta, before his journey to Gilley's, would have gained insight had he viewed urban cowboys from Michael's angle of vision. Although Adams holds no formal connection with Nashville, he represents that handful of fine artists who have chosen to delineate seriously any aspect of Country Music.

For all this century's years, the recording industry (from Manhattan to Hollywood) has hired commercial artists to prepare store-counter displays, record-release brochures, concert-tour posters, newspaper ads, and album covers. By functional definition, a commercial artist sells his skill to sell a product, while a fine artist paints for self, potential sales in galleries, or museum exhibitions. In terms of aesthetic codes, these two sets of creators often disagree upon the very nature of their guiding traditions.

Fortunately, some painters have crossed the classificatory barrier separating "high" from "pop" fields. Bluegrass fans will recall that Columbia Records commissioned Tom Allen, in the 1960s, to do a "far-out" series of Flatt & Scruggs LP covers. These commercial offerings were also described as "artistic," "elegant," "formal," or "modern"--words generally reserved for the prose of art criticism.

I invoke Allen's name purposely as a reminder that we lack published studies about his country music art, as well as about that of his followers. Museum curators proudly hung the originals for San Francisco's psychedelic rock album covers of the 1960s; I recall no similar exhibition for country LPs. How many artists have been moved by the spell of Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, Maybelle Carter, or Loretta Lynn? Is "high" art weakened if it depicts vernacular music? Surely, nothing intrinsic within folk or popular culture (pure or hybridized) should be foreign to the artist's eye.

Perhaps this report on Michael Adams will call attention to other gifted painters who have turned in recent decades to country music in all its manifestations. My meeting with him came about by chance. While teaching at the University

of Texas in 1979, I caught a last-day showing of his vivid paintings at the student union building (October 12-25). It took me but a few minutes to open his tavern's swinging doors and to hear his jukebox music.

When a modest young man, booted and levi-clad, began to dismantle the show, I introduced myself to learn that Adams was a fellow teacher of English. He accepted my offer to help transport the framed paintings; he remained calm in the face of my enthusiasm for his cowboys and girls. In short, we became friends. During the spring of 1980, I attempted to persuade the Laguna Gloria Museum to exhibit his paintings, but failed. I could not comprehend a local institution overlooking the exciting convergence of country and rock music ("progressive country," "cosmic cowboy," "outlaw") which had spread from Austin to the world.

Seeing Michael casually, usually before or after our respective classes on campus, I learned that he complemented painting with writing. Unpublished novels, in neat stationery boxes filled an office shelf. I welcomed his great pleasure in the news that a Texas friend planned to break into regional publishing with Michael's novel, *Blind Man's Bluff* (Austin: Imperial Palm Press, October, 1982). Occasionally, Louanne and I with Michael and Dorothea shared an evening or outing. In my final year at UT, I borrowed one of his oils, a portrait of Austin's pianist/singer Marcia Ball, which graced our near-campus apartment until we left Texas. Before returning home to San Francisco, I traded this picture for a huge untitled honky-tonk scene. It seemed important to carry something big from Texas west to California--to mark Lone Star cheer in good music and loyal friends.

Writing about Adams's paintings for *JEMF Quarterly* readers, I am conscious that he is unknown to them and that his works have not previously been reproduced in journals. Hence, I offer a few biographical facts to frame my responses. Born on 13 February 1946, he grew up in Killeen, Texas, on the Lampasas River. He attended Texas Tech at Lubbock (B.A., 1968), and the University of Texas, Austin (Ph.D., 1973), subsequently teaching literature and writing in both the universities of Pennsylvania and Texas.

At Philadelphia, during 1975, he enrolled briefly in a painting class, but it did not satisfy

his curiosity. Basically, Adams is a self-taught painter, who experimented at the easel after reading about past techniques in the lives of art masters. Some viewers feel, incorrectly, that he works in acrylic. Instead, he works in oil, thinly applied in multiple layers to capture the mechanical tones of artificial light.

In his initial paintings, Adams worked abstractly with color studies and prismatic light sequences in the manner of Josef Albers. However, something tugged him away from abstraction: home to childhood memories of ranch cowboys, to a high school infatuation with rodeo riding, to college brawls at roadhouse watering holes. Adams did not strive consciously to portray either realistic or narrative scenes in the manner of Thomas Hart Benton and his fellow regionalists of the 1930s. Rather, Michael wished to capture neon's cold rays reflected from the trappings of those souls who live perpetually in saloons and country-discos.

While still at the University of Pennsylvania, Adams considered painting cowboy images held in memory. Returning home, he sketched "cowboys" in Austin bars preparatory to working on canvas. On 16 January 1979, he exhibited his works publicly for the first time at Governor William Clements's inaugural ball. The knowledge that others liked his paintings guided Michael to a second exhibition in the Texas Union, during October.

For the campus show, he penned a succinct statement of intent, "Neon Cowboy," in which he wrote: "I became fascinated [at Penn] with the relationship between light and color--especially the difficulty of controlling intense light.... Working with abstract forms, I did not find a means of controlling light and color, nor a suitable subject matter until I returned to Texas to discover what I call the 'neon cowboy.' [In the bars] I could study both that elusive light carried by the distinctive, confident stride of a man moving away from the bar and that steady, glowing light at once reflected and absorbed by the stranger sitting pensively in the corner."

Infrequent visitors sense honkytonks as dark caverns and know these haunts only as night places. Adams sees them bathed in constant light: hot/cold, exposed/shaded, blinding/revealing. His bar lights both create and mirror moods. My initial impression on seeing some twenty of his paintings in a single gallery was that of a jumble of rainbows. Upon close inspection, the arrayed colors dissolved into related scenes, apparently painted over a span from dawn to dusk. Finally, I identified the specific subject for each painting.

In my attention to the content of Michael's work I was on familiar terrain, having observed blue-collar youngsters at the Split Rail Inn and the Soap Creek Saloon reach out to counter-culture vice. I had learned in Austin to decipher semantic ambiguities when "dopers and ropers" mixed. In previous Graphics features, I had written about Michael Priest's concert flyers for the Armadillo

World Headquarters, and about Kerry Awn's Soap Creek monthly calendars. Their humorous ephemera helped prepare me for Adams's easel paintings. Ideally, American music enthusiasts should be able to view Priest and Awn's sardonic cartoons and broadsides (as well as those of co-workers) alongside Adams's luminous canvases. Perhaps a future study of Texas music will reach out to include the varied depictions of artists on the blazing scene.

I have selected eight paintings to illustrate this report. Full titles are appended in a checklist below. Briefly, Adams's "cowboys" represent familiar urbanites dressed down or up (depending on viewer's judgment). Most of these characters drink and dance; many preen; a few play pool. The musicians seem more natural, or less "decked out," than their listeners. A number of paintings employ conscious fantasy: cowboys clustered around dance-floor campfires; stagecoaches rolling into saloons; B-girls and girls in bars projecting erotic dreams.

In bounding art's varied segments, and, especially, in treating fine art with ethnographic clarity, we have had to inquire how and why our best painters touch mystery. The painter is a spellmaker whose canvas is a cauldron. Some artists distort line or scale; others shape allegory; still others deal out illusion. Many who practice camera-eye realism unwittingly end by altering everyday experience. Michael Adams, too, offers mystery. His tavern figures do not appear to be "real" cowboys, yet we know that ranch hands park pick-up trucks at taverns and venture inside. Does Michael suggest that the distinction between working and masquerading cowboys is insignificant, or, rather, that under neon's glare, we can never separate fact from fiction?

In progression from sorting out color to identifying subjects to demystifying Adams's paintings, I questioned the intensity of my personal response. Why do I treasure his work? I have long enjoyed cowboy imagery, whether of cattle herder or carouser. Michael stood out, I believe, for his melding of craft skill and vision, his ease with modern impulses, and respect for traditional themes. Facing his paintings, we assume that his Texas cowboys do not ride the range. Instead, for all their costumed splendor and whiskey bravado, they hold up the slate upon which we mark our gaucheries. Hence, the subjects in his paintings help shape fresh meaning for our individual life trails.

Beyond the sheer delight in Adams's scenes, I feel that he hit the bulls-eye in his coinage of "neon cowboy" as side kick to drugstore, cosmic, and urban poseur. A comparable usage in print appears in the *Atlanta (Journal) Weekly*, 28 September 1980, where reporter Michelle Green visits Scooter's Neon Cowboy bar at Sandy Springs--an orgy of pretension courtesy of Calvin Klein, Izod, Volvo, and Charlie Daniels.

More important than Adams's attention to



NEON COWBOY



LONE STAR COUPLE



JUKE BOX FIDDLER



JESS DEMAIN



POOL PLAYER SEATED



LAST WALTZ



HONKYTONK RAINBOW



STAGECOACH DREAM

western accoutrement is his understanding of the honkytonk as an emotional stage, once trod mainly by rural folk and industrial workers, but, now, in urban Texas, used alike by city dwellers and professional workers. In transferring tavern ambience to canvas, Michael undertakes to tell fellow Texans something of their land's deep changes. Essentially, he uses the paintbrush as a spotlight to amplify the light from slender glass tubes. Neon gas energizes his depictions. Each painting probes a state of consciousness: make-believe, reverie, retreat into the bottle, saloon courage.

Many fine artists, following the lead of Frederick Remington and Charles Russell, have drawn vaqueros on the trail, or wranglers at the corral. Some, like Thomas Eakins and Maynard Dixon, have portrayed westerners playing music, but few have turned for subjects to Hollywood's dudes or Nashville's outlaws. Accordingly, we choose whether to place Adams in the long company of cowboy genre painters, or in a more modern class of urban reporters/social critics like John Sloan or Ben Shahn.

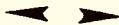
While living in Austin, I met many Texans who resented the fakery of cosmic cowboys, their dreary days and wasted nights. These naysayers could hardly wait for Texas chic to fade, for the last feather to droop from the elevated Stetson. Fortunately, Adams lost no time lamenting the demise of neon cowboyism. Instead, he absorbed

the imagery of bourbon queens, devils in long-necks, solitary pool players, cheating hearts, and swinging doors.

Adams chose for himself the task of going behind forbidden doors, of letting sunlight into closed places. Physically, his honkytonks exist in and near Austin city limits, yet, figuratively, they stretch from the Golden Gate to the Potomac. Despite my feeling that Adams paints for an audience across our land, I cannot predict the response to his work by museum directors and journal editors. Many fine artists create out of solitary conviction, waiting for that great exhibition in the sky. Regardless of his formal reception, Adams offers much to those sheltered in the honkytonk's precincts as well as to those who avoid its walls.

Not all Americans relish the lyrics of beer-drinking music. Some wince at the line, "If you've got the money, honey, I've got the time." Some feel superior to dancers who cherish "Cotton-Eyed Joe." Others even attend council meetings protesting the licensing of additional bars in their communities. No matter our formal stance, no matter how we close minds to metaphor, none manages fully to escape the honkytonk's signal. In this sense, Michael Adams--teacher, novelist, painter--touches us with his neon-bathed lights. His color prisms on canvas brighten all our horizons.

-- San Francisco, CA



#### ADAMS CHECKLIST

I have restricted this checklist to paintings for which I have been able to borrow slides from Michael Adams. The individual works are undated; however, most were executed in 1977-79. Where Adams did not title his paintings, I have "filled in the blanks" (in brackets). Some of the early pieces no longer exist, having been re-used for new paintings. The eight items reproduced in this issue of the *JEMF Quarterly* are marked (\*).

1. Neon Cowboy*	11. [Pool Player Standing]	21. [Dancefloor Campfire]
2. [Neon Cowgirl]	12. [Pool Player Seated]*	22. Red and White Blues
3. Neon Drunk	13. Smokin' the Eight-Ball	23. [Stagecoach Dream]*
4. Dealer	14. Lone Star Scene	24. Neon Angels
5. Loner	15. Last Waltz*	25. [Jeans and Overalls]
6. (Rodeo) Concession	16. Cotton-Eyed Joe	26. [Statue]
7. Bar Room Eyes	17. [Bar Maid in Black]	27. Back Room
8. [Lone Star Couple]*	18. Honkytonk Rainbow*	28. Juke Box Light
9. Juke Box Fiddler*	19. Honkytonk Heaven*	29. [Half and Half]
10. Jess Demaine*	20. [Stringband Trio]	30. Last Ride



## JOHNNY RIVERS AND LINDA RONSTADT: ROCK 'N' ROLL REVIVALISTS

By B. Lee Cooper

The practice of recording previous hit songs is common in American musical history. During the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, popular singers invariably incorporated several "standards" into their radio performances, their dance band shows, and their 78-rpm releases. Although very little research has been published on the "standards" of the first decade of the rock era (1954-1964), it can be easily demonstrated that numerous contemporary artists have built significant portions of their repertoires on so-called golden oldie hits.<sup>1</sup>

Why do contemporary singers record tunes that were previous hits for other performers? Commercially, the goal of scoring a second "Hot 100" listing with a popularly-tested song is an understandable objective. Beyond the search for financial success there are other logical reasons to revive former hit tunes. Here the "known commodity" theory emerges. The lyrics and melody of a familiar song may enable a young artist to launch successfully his or her career (Ricky Nelson's "I'm Walking"--1957; Marie Osmond's "Paper Roses"--1973; and Leif Garrett's "Surfin' USA"--1977, "Runaround Sue"--1978, and "The Wanderer"--1978) by tapping a well-known musical resource. Beyond the mere duplication of a previous sound, though, some artists revive traditional tunes in order to demonstrate their own unique singing styles. The reinterpretation of a lyric or the conversion of a rhythm pattern has served several novice performers (Gloria Gaynor's "Never Can Say Goodbye"--1975; Amii Stewart's "Knock on Wood"--1979; and the Marcells's "Blue Moon"--1961, "Heartaches"--1961, and "Summertime"--1961) as well as experienced performers (Marvin Gaye's "I Heard it Through the Grapevine"--1968; Ike and Tina Turner's "Proud Mary"--1971; and Ray Charles's "Yesterday"--1967, "I Can't Stop Loving You"--1962, and "Living for the City"--1975). Still another reason for reviving a particular song is to pay tribute to the performing artistry or creative talent of its originator. Occasionally recording (Wilson Pickett's "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love"--1967 and Dave Edmunds's "I Hear You Knocking--1971); most of the time it is only implied (Elton John's "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"--1975; Ike and Tina Turner's "I've Been Loving You Too Long"--1969; and The Beatles's "Slow Down"--1964, "Roll Over Beethoven"--1964, and "Twist and Shout"--1964. A unique form of personal revival, of course, is the re-recording of a hit song by the original artist. There are several fine examples

of this phenomenon (Neil Sedaka's "Breaking Up is Hard to Do"--1962 and 1976; the Ventures's "Walk Don't Run"--1960 and 1964; Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi"--1970 and 1975; and Shirley and Lee's "Let the Good Times Roll"--1956 and 1960).

The preceding illustrations of song revivals offer only a small sample of this fascinating musical activity. Clearly the practice is as common to new performers as it is to established artists. From Elvis Presley to the Beatles, from Ray Charles to the Rolling Stones, even the careers of popular music's most prestigious and innovative stars have been nurtured, enriched, and extended through re-issuing previous hits. It is particularly fascinating to investigate in discographic detail the recording histories of two very popular, very influential artists to see how, when, and from whom they "borrowed" hit songs to spark their live performances and to fill their albums. The remainder of this essay will concentrate on the activities of Johnny Rivers and Linda Ronstadt, two of the most successful rock 'n' roll revivalists of the past two decades.

### I

Johnny Rivers (b. 7 November 1942) has been a potent force on the American popular music scene since 1964. His diversified talents as a singer, guitarist, composer, record producer, music publisher, and recording company executive are well known. The high quality of his recorded sound--whether from "live" nightclub performances at the Whisky-A-Go-Go, or on themes for television shows, or in standard studio performances--has consistently generated positive public attention. It is hardly surprising that Joel Whitburn's survey of the "Top 100 Artists" in the pop music field between 1955 and 1972 ranked Johnny Rivers at No. 55, just nine spots behind Chuck Berry (No. 46), but twenty-one spots ahead of Little Richard (No. 76).<sup>2</sup>

For the rock 'n' roll fan who continues to cherish the tunes of the pre-Beatles era (1954-1964), Johnny Rivers is a very special figure. Much of his recording career has focused on reproducing the juke box sounds that he encountered in Baton Rouge, New York City, and Nashville during his youth. He is a master Rock song revivalist. This is not to imply that he

lacks creative musical talent. The numerous original pop hits that he has written--including "Poor Side of Town"--and recorded--including "Summer Rain," "Secret Agent Man," and "Swayin' to the Music (Slow Dancin')"--belie this type of shallow criticism. Instead, labeling him a "Rock Revivalist" is an acknowledgment of his distinctive ability to take another person's musical creation and to breathe new vitality into it, to make it "come alive again" for a new generation of listeners. Johnny Rivers is not a "cover recording" pirate seeking to steal profits from less well-known artists; nor is he simply a carbon copy record re-issue fanatic. His recordings rank among the finest illustrations of Rock 'N' Roll song revivals. They demonstrate not only professional sensitivity to original recording styles, but also the genius of an artist who understands and appreciates the use of contemporary audio technology as a flexible device for recreating former musical triumphs. Quality and character are hallmarks of Johnny Rivers's song revivals.

The chart in the Appendix provides selected illustrations of the song revival activities of Johnny Rivers between 1964 and 1977.<sup>4</sup> The objective in constructing this outline is not to present all of this recording star's revival tunes. Rather, this presentation is designed to show how this talented singer's career has been dedicated to retrieving, updating, and rejuvenating his own Rock 'N' Roll roots.

The significance of Johnny Rivers's efforts as a performer of both old and new Rock songs cannot be underestimated. He represents a significant vocal bridge between the pre-Beatles and post-Beatles decades. Although 'fifties giants such as Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, and Jerry Lee Lewis continue to defy generation gap barriers with their continuing singing vigor, the recent deaths of Elvis Presley and Bill Haley have signaled that most authentic rock 'n' rollers from the 1950s and early 1960s are reaching ages where performing will probably cease to be their primary wage-earning activity. Similarly, few contemporary pop groups display the same unwavering devotion to Rock's roots that originally motivated the Beatles and continues to fuel the artistic imaginations of Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones. Of the current crop of popular male singers and musicians, the only rivals for Johnny Rivers's revivalist role are Daryl Dragon, Jacky Ward, Dave Loggins and Jim Messina, Narvel Felts, and a few others. If the sounds of 1954-1964 are to continue to leaven contemporary music, there must be a cadre of current performers who will either reacquaint or initiate modern listeners to the potent songs of Chuck Berry, Willie Dixon, Otis Blackwell, Jimmy Reed, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, Huey Smith, Berry Gordy, and Chris Kenner.

## II

Within the past five years several female singers have successfully revived a number of classic Rock 'N' Roll tunes. Dolly Parton cut "Great Balls of Fire" (RCA 11705); Tanya Tucker

issued a version of "Not Fade Away" (MCA 40976); Linda Ronstadt recorded "Just One Look" (Asylum 46011); Rita Coolidge released "One Fine Day" (A&M 2169); and Amii Stewart produced a disco-oriented approach to "Knock on Wood" (Ariola 7736). The recording activities of these five popular female artists illustrate a dominant trend in contemporary popular music. During the last decade numerous singing stars--female and male, new and veteran performers representing such diverse singing styles as country, jazz, pop, soul, rock, and disco--have been raiding rock's musical attic to uncover usable tunes from previous decades. Obviously, the original hits of Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly and the Crickets, Doris Troy, the Chiffons, and Eddie Floyd served the five ladies mentioned above very well. Similarly, the works of rhythm and blues giants such as the Drifters, Charles Brown, Chuck Berry, and Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs have recently provided suitable lyrical material for George Benson ("On Broadway"--Warner Brothers 8542), the Eagles ("Please Come Home for Christmas"--Asylum 45555), Elton John ("Johnny B. Goode"--MCA 41159), and Jackson Browne ("Stay"--Asylum 45485).

Occasional reliance on reissuing "Oldies but Goodies" is understandable and has been a relatively common recording practice. However, some artists have been indelibly wedded to sponsoring record revivals throughout their careers. As illustrated in previous paragraphs, Johnny Rivers is the primary male exponent of this recording tactic. On the distaff side, the foremost female figure in the rock song recycling sweepstakes is Linda Ronstadt (b. 15 July 1946). The fact that the management of Ronstadt's career has been extremely complex since she emerged as lead singer with the Stone Poneys in 1967 means that the selection of her recording material may or may not represent her own choices. Even if she exercises total artistic control over her repertoire, though, the power of suggestion by producers, arrangers, friends, and other sources surely contributes to the musical collage which emerges in her music.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the reason, Linda Ronstadt is the unchallenged queen of rock revivalists.

Throughout her long and successful career, Linda Ronstadt has demonstrated superior skill in interpreting, updating, and revitalizing several classic rock tunes. She has become the gorgeous embodiment of rock's evolution from the fifties and sixties into the seventies and eighties. She has not forgotten the simplicity of her media and is an extremely talented song stylist. She is physically attractive, vocally powerful, able to interpret lyrics with great skill, gifted in responding to and manipulating concert audiences, and a proven industry powerhouse who knows herself and the professionals with whom she works. What Linda Ronstadt has apparently always understood is that good popular music can frequently be discovered in the hit tunes of previous years. That's a very simple statement. Obviously, it is only the extraordinary performer who can translate this elementary revival theory into successful artistic practice. Linda Ronstadt can.

One dramatic way to illustrate the impact of song revivals on Linda Ronstadt's career is to examine her 45-rpm hit production during the 1967-1979 period. During that time she attained *Billboard's* "Top 100" charts with twenty-three songs. More than half of these tunes were revivals of previous *Billboard*-charted songs. Beyond the realm of 45s in the world of albums, the revival pattern in Linda Ronstadt's tune selection is once again obvious. The selected discography in the Appendix presents eleven years of single and LP record-making success by this highly talented female singer.

The song revival pattern depicted in the chart has been acknowledged by one of Linda Ronstadt's perceptive biographers. In 1978 Vivian Claire noted,

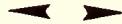
*Heart Like A Wheel* was a phenomenon. It established a pattern of success that Linda has been able to repeat over and over. The formula depends largely on Peter Asher, on brilliant and creative production, and on encouraging and supporting Linda's own taste in music rather than forcing musical ideas onto her....Asher helped helped to make Linda more marketable by encouraging her to include two or three oldies on each album. Oldies like "You're No Good" and "When Will I Be Loved" sold *Heart Like A Wheel*, creating a much larger audience for her more subtle work with talented but not as well known songwriters like Jackson Browne, Warren Zevon, J. D. Souther, Anna McGarrigle, and Karla Bonoff, to name a few. This is not to imply that Linda's approach to

oldies is anything other than brilliant. A solid part of her creativity is how sweetly--and with what apparent ease--she is able to remake, and improve, songs like Smokey Robinson's "Tracks of My Tears."<sup>7</sup>

### III

What general conclusions can be drawn from the commercial success and celebrity status which Johnny Rivers and Linda Ronstadt have achieved through their record revival activities? Speculation is possible, but certainty is not. By age and cultural exposure, both Johnny Rivers and Linda Ronstadt are children of the rock era (1954-1964). Their own musical roots--in terms of songs, singing styles, and favorite artists--probably reinforced their willingness to record tunes from that time. Granted, their decision to continue a record revival pattern is undoubtedly founded more in their chart-topping, economic success than on either personal preference or nostalgia. But as younger generations emerge, it is interesting to note that their collective receptivity to songs from the fifties and sixties seems to demonstrate that new "standards" of popular music are being established each year. For the parents of the post-World War II baby boom this means that "Stardust," "Some Enchanted Evening," and "Deep Purple" are being either joined or supplanted by a variety of new numbers such as "Memphis," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Silver Threads and Golden Needles," and "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'." Johnny Rivers and Linda Ronstadt are in the vanguard of a legion of contemporary rock revivalists. They have followed the advice of Edgar Winter when he sang, "Keep Playin' That Rock 'N' Roll!"<sup>8</sup>

--Newberry College  
Newberry, South Carolina



### NOTES

1. B. Lee Cooper and Verdan D. Traylor, "Establishing Rock Standards--The Practice of Record Revivals in Contemporary Music, 1953-1977," *Goldmine*, No. 36 (May 1979), pp. 37-38; and B. Lee Cooper, "The Song Revival Revolution of the Seventies: Tapping the Musical Roots of Rock," *Goldmine*, No. 42 (November 1979), p. 126.
2. This ranking system, which is quantitatively based upon the number of weeks that a performer's songs were listed on *Billboard's* "Hot 100" Chart, is presented in *Top Pop Records, 1955-1972* (Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Record Research, Inc., 1973), pp. 389-400.
3. One might also note the eclectic nature of Johnny Rivers's song selections throughout his career. Although this essay focuses on music of 1954-1964 vintage, it should not go unnoticed that Rivers also recorded Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" (*Go, Johnny, Go!*--United Artists UAL 3386), the World War II classic "(There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover" (*Go, Johnny, Go!*), and at least two Frank Sinatra tunes--"Softly as I Leave You" and "Strangers in the Night" (*Changes--Imperial* LP 9334). He has also recorded several Beatles's tunes including "I Should Have Known Better" (*In Action--Imperial* LP 9280), "I'll Cry Instead" (*Meanwhile Back at the Whisky A-Go-Go--Imperial* LP 9284), "Can't Buy Me Love" (*Here We A-Go-Go-Again!--Imperial* LP 9274, and "Run For Your Life" (*And I Know You Wanna Dance--Imperial* LP 9307).

4. The author wishes to express his gratitude to Mr. William L. Schurk, Sound Recordings Archivist at Bowling Green (Ohio) State University's Audio Center, for providing much of the discographic information used in this study.
5. A variety of books and articles chronicle the career of Linda Ronstadt. Among these are: Carl Arrington, "A Heart to Heart with Linda Ronstadt," *Creem*, VIII (December 1976), pp. 44-47ff; Vivian Claire, *Linda Ronstadt* (New York: Flash Books, 1978); Noel Coppage, "Linda Ronstadt Linda Ronstadt," *Stereo Review*, XXXVII (November 1976), pp. 78-82; Cameron Crowe, "Linda Ronstadt: The Million Dollar Woman," *Rolling Stone* (December 2, 1976), pp. 14-17; Stephen Holden, "Linda Ronstadt Punks Out," *Rolling Stone* (April 3, 1980), p. 63; Susan Katz, "Linda Ronstadt," in *Superwoman of Rock* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), pp. 59-84; Annie Leibovitz, "Linda Ronstadt: More Than Just One Luck," *Rolling Stone* (April 3, 1980), pp. 10-13; "Linda Down the Wind," *Time*, CIX (February 28, 1977), pp. 58-62; Maury Ellen Moore, *The Linda Ronstadt Scrapbook* (New York: Sunridge Publishers, 1978); Katherine Orloff, "Linda Ronstadt," in *Rock 'N Roll Woman* (Los Angeles, California: Nash Publishing, 1975), pp. 121-138; John Rockwell, "Living in the U.S.A.," in *Stranded: Rock and Roll for a Desert Island*, edited by Greil Marcus (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 188-218; Steve Simels, "Linda Ronstadt: Toughening Up," *Stereo Review*, XLI (December 1978), p. 122; Jean Vallely and Linda Ronstadt, "Playboy Interview: Linda Ronstadt," *Playboy*, XXVII (April 1980), pp. 85-118; and "Who is Really the Most Popular Female Singer?" *Record Digest*, I (March 15, 1978), pp. 3-7.
6. No reference is made here to the following early albums: *The Stone Poneys* (Capitol ST 11382), *Evergreen* (Capitol ST 2763), and *Stone Poneys and Friends* (Capitol ST 2863).
7. *Linda Ronstadt* (New York: Flash Books, 1978), pp. 55-56.
8. Epic 10788 (released in 1972).

THE JOHNNY RIVERS' ROCK 'N' ROLL REVIVAL  
SYSTEM: SELECTED EXAMPLES OF HIS HIT TUNES,  
1964-1977

Date of Release by Rivers (Record Number)	Title of Song and Author(s)	Date of Original Release (Record Number)	Name of Original Recording Artist(s)
1964 (Imperial 66832)	"Memphis" (C. Berry)	1959 (Chess 1729)	Chuck Berry
1964 (Imperial 66056)	"Maybelline" (C. Berry)	1955 (Chess 1604)	Chuck Berry
1964 (Imperial 66075)	"Mountain of Love" (H. Dorman)	1960 (Rita 1003)	Harold Dorman
1965 (Imperial 66087)	"Midnight Special" (Adapted from traditional American folk song)	1960 (Guaranteed 205)	Paul Evans
1965 (Imperial 66087)	"Cupid" (S. Cooke)	1961 (RCA Victor 47-7883)	Sam Cooke
1965 (Imperial 66133)	"Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" (P. Seeger)	1962 (Capitol 4671)	Kingston Trio
1965 (Imperial 66144)	"Under Your Spell Again" (D. Rhodes and B. Owens)	1959 (Capitol 4245)	Buck Owens
1967 (Imperial 66277)	"Baby I Need Your Lovin'" (E. Holland, B. Holland, and L. Dozier)	1964 (Motown 1062)	Four Tops
1971 (United Artists 50822)	"Sea Cruise" (H. Smith)	1959 (Ace 554)	Frankie Ford

1972 (United Artists 50960)	"Rockin' Pneumonia and The Boogie Woogie Flu" (J. Vincent and H. Smith)	1957 (Ace 530)	Huey "Piano" Smith and the Clowns
1973 (United Artists 198)	"Blue Suede Shoes" (C. Perkins)	1956 (Sun 234)	Carl Perkins
1977 (Big Tree 16106)	"Curious Mind (Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um) (C. Mayfield)	1964 (Okeh 7187)	Major Lance
			<u>B. Album Releases</u>
1964 <u>(Johnny Rivers at the Whisky-A-Go-Go – Imperial LP 9264)</u>	"Oh Lonesome Me" (D. Gibson)	1958 (RCA Victor 47-7133)	Don Gibson
	"Landy Miss Clandy" (L. Price)	1952 (Specialty 428)	Lloyd Price
	"Walkin' The Dog" (R. Thomas)	1963 (Stax 140)	Rufus Thomas
	"You Can Have Her" (I Don't Want Her)" (B. Cook)	1961 (Epic 9434)	Roy Hamilton
	"Multiplication" (B. Darin)	1961 (Atco 6214)	Bobby Darin
	"Brown-Eyed Handsome Man" (C. Berry)	1956 (Chess 1635)	Chuck Berry
1964 <u>(Here We A-Go-Go Again – Imperial LP 9274)</u>	"Josephine" (A. Domino and D. Bartholomew)	1960 (Imperial 5704)	Fats Domino
	"High Heel Sneakers" (R. Higgenbotham)	1964 (Checker 1067)	Tommy Tucker
	"I've Got A Woman" (R. Charles)	1965 (Atlantic 1050)	Ray Charles

"Bobby What You Want Me To Do" (J. Reed)	1960 (Vee-Jay 333)	Jimmy Reed
"Roll Over Beethoven" (C. Berry)	1956 (Chess 1626)	Chuck Berry
"Johnny B. Goode" (C. Berry)	1958 (Chess 1691)	Chuck Berry
"Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" (D. Williams and S. David)	1957 (Sun 267)	Jerry Lee Lewis
"Dang Me!" (R. Miller)	1964 (Smash 1881)	Roger Miller
"To Be Loved" (T. Carlo, B. Gordy, Jr., and G. Gordy)	1958 (Brunswick 55052)	Jackie Wilson
1964 <u>(Go, Johnny, Go! —</u> <u>United Artists UAL 3386)</u>	1964 (Chess 1916)	Chuck Berry
"Promised Land" (C. Berry)	1964 (Chess 1916)	Chuck Berry
"I'm In Love Again" (A. Domino and D. Bartholomew)	1956 (Imperial 5386)	Fats Domino
"Rhythm of the Rain" (J. Guimoe)	1963 (Valiant 6026)	The Cascades
"Oh, Pretty Woman" (R. Orbison and B. Dees)	1964 (Monument 851)	Roy Orbison
"Moody River" (G. D. Bruce)	1961 (Dot 16209)	Pat Boone
"Keep A-Knockin'" (R. Penniman)	1957 (Specialty 611)	Little Richard
"Silver Threads and Golden Needles" (D. Rhodes and J. Reynolds)	1962 (Philips 40038)	The Springfields
"Land of 1,000 Dances" (C. Kerner)	1963 (Instant 3252)	Chris Kenner
1965 <u>Meanwhile Back At The</u> <u>Whisky-A-Go-Go —</u> <u>Imperial 9284)</u>		

"Break Up"	1958 (Sun 303)	Jerry Lee Lewis
"Stagger Lee"	1958 (H. Logan and L. Price)	Lloyd Price
"Susie Q"	1957 (D. Hawkins, S. J. Lewis, and E. Broadwater)	Dale Hawkins
"Greenback Dollar"	1963 (Traditional) (CAP 4898)	The Kingston Trio
"Tom Dooley"	1958 (Traditional) (Capitol 4049)	Kingston Trio
"Michael (Row The Boat Ashore)"	1961 (Traditional) (United Artists 258)	The Highwaymen
"Blowin' In The Wind"	1963 (B. Dylan)	Peter, Paul, and Mary
"Green, Green"	1963 (B. McGuire and R. Sparks) (Columbia 42805)	The New Christy Minstrels
"If I Had A Hammer"	1962 (L. Hays and P. Seeger) (Warner Brothers 5296)	Peter, Paul, and Mary
"Tall Oak Tree"	1960 (D. Burnette) (Era 3012)	Dorsey Brothers
"500 Miles"	1963 (B. Bare and H. West) (RCA 8238)	Bobby Bare
"You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'" (P. Spector, B. Marn, and C. Weil)	1964 (Philles 124)	The Righteous Brothers
<u>(And I Know You Wanna Dance - Imperial LP 9307)</u>		
"La Bamba"	1959 (De-Fi 4110)	Ritchie Valens
<u>(Johnny Rivers' Golden Hits - Imperial LP 12324)</u>		

"Twist and Shout"	1962	The Isley Brothers
(B. Russell and P. Medley)	(Wand 124)	
"You Better Move On"	1962	Arthur Alexander
(A. Alexander)	(Dot 16309)	
"Do You Wanna Dance"	1958	Bobby Freeman
(B. Freeman)	(Josie 835)	
"Searchin'"	1957	The Coasters
(J. Leiber and M. Stoller)	(Atco 6087)	
"So Fine"	1959	The Fiestas
(J. Otis)	(Old Town 1062)	
"It's All Right"	1963	The Impressions
(C. Mayfield)	(ABC-Paramount 10487)	
"Hang On Sloopy"	1964/65	Vibrations
(B. Russell and W. Farrell)	(Atlantic 2221)	
"Willie and the Hand Jive"	1965	The McCoys
(J. Otis)	(Bang 506)	
"Turn On Your Love Light"	1958	Johnny Otis
(D. Malone and J. Scott)	(Capitol 3966)	
"Six Days on the Road"	1961	Bobby Bland
(E. Green and C. Montgomery)	(Duke 344)	
"Something You Got"	1963	Dave Dudley
(C. Kenner)	(Golden Wing 3020)	
"Wild Night"	1964	Alvin Robinson
(Road -	(Tiger 104)	
Atlantic SD 7301)		
"Monkey Time"	1963	Major Lance
(C. Mayfield)	(Okeh 7175)	
"Outside Help"		
(Big Tree BN 76004)		

THE LINDA RONSTADT ROCK 'N' ROLL REVIVAL SYSTEM:  
SELECTED EXAMPLES OF HER HIT TUNES, 1967 -1979

A. 45 R.P.M. Releases

<u>Date of Release by Ronstadt (Record Number)</u>	<u>Title of Song and Author(s)</u>	<u>Date of Optional Release (Record Number)</u>	<u>Name of Original Recording Artist(s)</u>
1974 (Capitol 3990)	"You're No Good" (C. Ballard, Jr.)	1963 (Vee-Jay 566)	Betty Everett
1975 (Capitol 4050)	"When Will I Be Loved" (P. Everly)	1960 (Cadence 1380)	Everly Brothers
1975 (Capitol 4050)	"It Doesn't Matter Anymore" (P. Anka)	1959 (Coral 62074)	Buddy Holly
1975 (Asylum 45282)	"Heat Wave" (B. Holland, L. Dozier, and E. Holland)	1963 (Gordy 7022)	Martha and The Vandellas
1976 (Asylum 45340)	"That'll Be The Day" (J. Allison, B. Holly, and N. Petty)	1957 (Brunswick 55009)	The Crickets
1977 (Asylum 45431)	"Blue Bayou" . . (R. Orbison and J. Nelson)	1963 (Monument 824)	Roy Orbison
1978 (Asylum 45519)	"Back in the U.S.A." (C. Berry)	1959 (Chess 1729)	Chuck Berry
1979 (Asylum 46011)	"Just One Look" (G. Carroll and D. Payne)	1963 (Atlantic 2188)	Doris Troy
1979 (Asylum 46011)	"Love Me Tender" (E. Presley and V. Matson)	1956 (RCA Victor 47-6643)	Elvis Presley

B. ALBUM RELEASES<sup>6</sup>

1969 (Hand Sown, Home Grown - Capitol ST 208)	"Silver Threads and Golden Needles" (J. Rhodes and D. Reynolds)	1962 (Phillips 40038)	The Springfields
1970 (Silk Purse - Capitol ST 407)	"Lovesick Blues" (I. Mills and C. Friend)	1962 (RCA Victor 47-8013) (Vee-Jay 477)	Floyd Cramer Frank Ifield
	"Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" (G. Gorlin and C. King)	1960 (Scepter 1211)	The Shirelles
	"I'm Leavin' It All Up to You" (D. Terry and D. Harris)	1963 (Monteil 921)	Dale and Grace
1970 (Linda Ronstadt - Capitol SWAS 635)	"I Fall to Pieces" (H. Cochran and H. Howard)	1961 (Decca 31205)	Patsy Cline
	"Crazy Arms" (R. Mooney and C. Seals)	1956 (Columbia 21510)	Ray Price
	"I Can't Help It (If I'm Still In Love With You)" (H. Williams)	1958 (Dot 15680)	Margaret Whiting
1974 (Heart Like A Wheel - Asylum ST 11328)	"Crazy"	1961 (Decca 31317)	Patsy Cline
1976 (Hasten Down The Wind - Asylum 7E-1072)	"Crazy" (W. Nelson)	1961 (Decca 31317)	Patsy Cline
1978 (Living In the USA - Asylum 6E-155)	"When I Grow Too Old To Dream" (O. Hammerstein and S. Romberg)	1958 (Capitol 4048)	Ed Townsend

## RECORD REVIEWS

*ROCKIN' ROLLIN' ROBBINS:* Marty Robbins (Bear Family BFX-15045). Reissue of thirteen rockabilly recordings plus four unissued cuts, all from 1954-58. Selections: *Footprints in the Snow*, *It's Driving Me Crazy, Baby, I Need You (Like You Need Me)*, *Mean Mama Blues*, *That's All Right*, *Maybelline*, *Pretty Mama, I Can't Quit (I've Gone Too Far)*, *Long Tall Sally*, *Singing the Blues*, *Knee Deep in the Blues*, *Respectfully Miss Brooks*, *Mister Teardrop*, *Tennessee Toddy*, *Pain and Misery (Mean Mama Blues)*, *You Don't Owe Me a Thing*, *Long Gone Lonesome Blues*.

With the recent passing of Marty Robbins on 8 December 1982, after quadruple bypass heart surgery, it is now appropriate to assess this extraordinary artist's career in its totality. In his thirty years of recording, spanning from his earliest Columbia sessions in Hollywood in 1952 to his cameo appearance in the recent Clint Eastwood film "Honkytonk Man," Robbins has shown a versatility and expertise in interpreting different musical styles which is matched by few country artists. This aspect of Robbins's career has been obscured due to the overwhelming success of songs such as "A White Sport Coat" (1957), "El Paso" (1959), and "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife" (1970).

Overlooked completely by all but a few frantic record collectors is a series of remarkable selections recorded by Robbins between 1954 and 1958, of which *Rockin' Rollin' Robbins* consists. These were his rockabilly years--years which saw Robbins adapt easily to the new-fangled genre known as rock and roll, which threatened to destroy country music in the late 1950s. It was only through the efforts of producers Chet Atkins, Owen Bradley, and other Nashville moguls that country music was "saved." To some, including this reviewer, the cure was worse than the disease, as much of country music has since mutated to a benign form. In desperation, many country artists of the fifties, fearful of losing their youthful audience, turned to rock and roll. Most failed miserably, but Marty Robbins was an admirable victor, producing a series of convincing, vibrant rockabilly sides, though they were commercially unsuccessful.

The benchmark recording of Robbins's rockabilly period was also a record that first gave credibility to a 19-year-old truck driver from Memphis, Tennessee, named Elvis Presley. In July 1954, Presley had recorded a cover version of Arthur Crudup's rhythm and blues classic "That's All Right" for the Memphis-based Sun label. The record showed modest sales in Memphis, but came nowhere near national success. Late that year, Robbins, approaching his second anniversary as a member of the Grand Ole Opry, heard Presley's recording and liked it enough to cover it at his next Columbia session in Nashville on 7 December 1954. Up to that time, Robbins had dabbled with a variety of country-related genres beginning with a credible Eddy Arnold imitation (Robbins always expressed admiration for Arnold's "feel" for country music) and continuing with Hawaiian, sacred, and even a worthy western swing recording ("It's a Long, Long Ride," CO-21176, 1953), featuring a painfully young Johnny Gimble scatting on fiddle.

With his next session on 9 August 1955, Robbins's singing made a quantum leap in forcefulness and assurance as he covered another current rockabilly classic, Chuck Berry's "Maybelline," then riding high on the charts. Also recorded at this session was "Pretty Mama," Marty Robbins's first rockabilly composition, the psychopathic lyrics of which were all but obscured by the lively tempo, rapid-fire rhythm, and Robbins's confident, exuberant vocal. "Pretty Mama" dealt with a familiar subject: that of the narrator scorned by his girlfriend, who had turned to another man. However, the way Robbins (as narrator) treated this subject was terrifying: key stanzas showing the singer justifying pre-meditated, maniacally cold-blooded murder:

I'm gonna go out this mornin'  
Gonna buy me a long '38;  
And when ole Monkey Boy sees me a-comin'  
I'm gonna shoot the last part goin' out the gate.  
  
I'm gonna knock on her front door  
Gonna run around and watch the back door slam,  
Then like a Royal Mounted Policeman,  
Gonna stay right there until I get my man.

concluding with the rubato declaration:

Ain't no woman gonna get the best of me

Three months later, Marty Robbins was in the studio again, recording another well-written rockabilly original "Tennessee Toddy," which included Robbins whistling through his teeth (he was never able to whistle through the lips), which would surface a decade later on "Ribbon of Darkness." Robbins also provided "Tennessee Toddy" with a novel way of concluding each stanza:

I'll tell you more about it  
In the very next verse of my song.

Two sides from March 1956 saw Robbins again imitating Elvis Presley. However, this time it was a more mature Robbins imitating a more mature Presley, who was now with RCA Victor. Robbins's composition "Respectfully Miss Brooks" showed Robbins extending syllables to five times their normal length and sliding into the falsetto voice that became a trademark on songs such as "Begging to You" and "Devil Woman" in the 1960s. "You Don't Owe Me a Thing" was a faithful copy of any one of a number of Presley doo-wop influenced records from his early RCA days ("Love Me").

Robbins's recording of "Mister Teardrop" (a by now discarded title heaped on him by Opry publicists in the early fifties) was actually a tribute to Johnny Ray's unique blue-eyed R&B style. Rounding out the March 1956 session was a screaming, atomic version of Little Richard's "Long Tall Sally."

The previous November had seen Marty Robbins record his friend Melvin Endsley's "Singing the Blues," a song which rose from the tradition of "Lovesick Blues," the two songs being nearly identical. The song remained unreleased for nearly a year, but eventually "Singing the Blues" did for Marty Robbins what "Lovesick Blues" did for Hank Williams: it made him a national star, riding on the coattails of Guy Mitchell's monster pop cover. However, in gaining a national reputation, Robbins also was now a national product and subsequent sessions saw the end of his rockabilly years as he began his "prom-country" period under the auspices of New York producer Mitch Miller and his henchman Ray Coniff. From vital rockabilly to pabulum such as "A White Sport Coat" in a matter of months.

Bear Family Records has assembled seventeen of Marty Robbins's rockabilly-flavored selections in a tasteful array produced by Richard Weize. Plaudits to Weize for using the sought-after Columbia 10" LP from 1956 for the cover illustration. The short-lived Columbia "House Party" series featured a sparse three songs on each side, but the Robbins disc, entitled "Rock'n Roll'n Robbins" today commands collectors's prices of well into three figures.

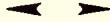
Weize has also excavated four previously unissued cuts from the Columbia mines, including a wonderful cover version of "Footprints in the Snow" (from Bill Monroe's 1945 Columbia recording) complete with pre-session coughing and tuning, and a 1954 version of Robbins's "Mean Mama Blues," which was re-recorded rockabilly style a year later. The 1954 version, entitled "Pain and Misery," is completely different, featuring a vocal trio (Robbins, guitarist Ray Edenton, and bass man Junior Huskey) singing the tune a la the Delmore Brothers's "Blues Stay Away from Me."

There are only two drawbacks in this otherwise glorious reissue: the absence of liner notes, and a mysterious tape drop-out in the opening strains of "Maybelline." (To be fair, original pressings of the tune also reveal this drop-out, leading me to believe it was on the master tape this way.)

*Rockin' Rollin' Robbins* is long overdue. Robbins's rockabilly period contains some of the most exciting and powerful sides from the fifties. The mono sound is exquisite and incredibly crisp, as it is on all Bear Family issues, including marvelous packages featuring Johnny Cash, the Collins Kids, Johnny Horton, Billy Haley, Janis Martin, and other seminal rockabilly figures.

As for Marty Robbins, his effortless transition into rockabilly in 1954 and early 1955 predicated all but a few of his contemporaries. His colorful lyrics which would be further amplified during his "gunfighter ballad" period are in retrospect unique in rockabilly, where the accent was on the accent, and lyrics took on the mundane "let's-dance-and-romance-at-the-hop-and-the-malt-shop" theme and its numerous variations. Hopefully, someone will do an in-depth analysis of Marty Robbins's fascinating thirty-year recording career and sprawling repertoire. His death leaves a tremendous void in a field where mediocrity abounds, and talents such as Robbins are but a few scant gems in a desert of costume jewelry. How's that for imagery, Marty?

--Cary Ginell  
University of California  
Los Angeles, California



the Ozark Folk Center, with a 32-page illustrated brochure by George West and William K. McNeil. Selections of Record I, "Folk Narratives": Almeda Riddle--*There's None of Us Strong Enough*; Drew Bowers--*The Yankee in Grandmother's Potatoes*; Coy Logan--*Escaping the Bushwhackers*, *The Miller-Robinson Feud* (conclusion); Carroll Hancock--*The Indians' Hidden Treasure*, *Like an Elephant--Like a Goose*; Melvin D. Anglin--*My First Memory*, *Grandpa Got Even With the Scalawags*, *A Preacher at the House*, *The Hoop Snake*, *Uncle Cheyenne--Storyteller*; Hubert Wilkes--*Fools in Kansas*, *Big Watermelons*, *Giant Mosquitos*, *Weaning the Man, Is it Shelled?*, *The Split Dog*, *The Bear Dog*; Glenn Ohrlin--*The Cow and the College Boy*; Dr. William Hudson--*Uncle Will's Trip to the Moon*, *The Hudson that Killed the Panther*, *Tipping the Porter*, *The Lyin' Contest*. Selections of Record II, "Folksongs": Noble Cowden--*The House Carpenter's Wife*, *Two Little Lads, Drunkard's Hell*, *The Rattlesnake Song*, *Bring Back My Blue Eyed Boy*; Kenneth Rorie--*Willie Moore, Rich Old Lady, Swing and Turn Jubilee*; Rance Blankenship--*Boston Burglar*, *The Creole Girl*; Bob Blair--*Nola Shannon, I Can't Stay Here by Myself*, *The Fatal Wedding*, *The Big Crap Game*.

There is no consensus on the exact boundaries of the Ozark Mountain region, which stretches between eastern Kansas and Oklahoma, across Missouri and Arkansas, and into southwestern Illinois. However, commentators agree that this is a valuable region for cultural study. Populated in the first half of the nineteenth century by settlers migrating from the southern Appalachians, the Ozark Mountains have yielded in particular a wealth of folklore traditions.

Almost singlehandedly responsible for the comprehensive documentation of those traditions was Vance Randolph, who for some three decades gathered and published collections of Ozark songs, tales, customs and beliefs, and speech. And other collectors have followed in Randolph's footsteps. Not only has the Ozark region been vibrant with folk traditions, but for the past forty years there has been an ongoing legacy of collecting and savoring those traditions. *Not Far From Here: Traditional Tales and Songs Recorded in the Arkansas Ozarks* is an impressive addition to this legacy.

George West and William K. McNeil recorded the storytellers and singers on this two-record collection in northern Arkansas in 1979 and 1980. Designed as an educational tool, *Not Far From Here* is published by the Ozark Folk Center of Mountainview, Arkansas, one of the nation's finest centers for documenting and displaying regional traditions. In this collection West and McNeil have put together a lively, informative, and representative sampling of stories and songs from the Arkansas Ozarks. Ideal for teachers and valuable for anyone interested in American folk traditions, *Not Far From Here* is well recorded, entertaining, and carefully edited.

The album's brochure provides a good introduction to the Ozarks and to the study of folklore, as well as brief but sensible discussions of "folk narrative," "folksongs," traditional performance style, and Ozark dialect. West and McNeil have ordered the selections by performer and have included background information on each person and photographs. The notes to the selections include a commentary on each story or song, a transcription of the text, and a glossary of unfamiliar terms and phrases.

Record I of *Not Far From Here* contains twenty-three narratives told by eight storytellers from various places in northwestern Arkansas. Delightfully varied, these legends and folktales include such staples of Ozark storytelling as Civil War era stories of Yankees, bushwhackers, and carpetbaggers, tales of hidden Indian treasure, descriptions of fantastic animals, and stories of bloody feuds of bygone days. Well-recorded, *Not Far From Here* captures a good bit of the art and wit of the Ozark raconteurs who, as Vance Randolph once observed, are some of the "best talkers ever known." In addition, West and McNeil place the stories and the storytellers within the context of both folklore study and Ozark history and tradition.

Record II contains fourteen songs performed by four Ozark singers who are appearing for the first time on a record album. Like the narratives, this collection of songs is admirable for its comprehensiveness. *Not Far From Here* provides a sampling of the variety in the Ozark song tradition, a variety too often overlooked by collectors who singlemindedly sought relics of British balladry. Thus, from these four singers we hear examples of the English and Scottish ballads in Child's collection, ballads from British broadsides native American ballads and songs--some of them originating in the popular music industry and found on early commercial recordings, and playparty songs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In his commentary McNeil discusses the singers's styles and the songs's origins and popularity in American tradition, and also notes the appearance of songs on commercial recordings. Like its companion disc, this collection of folksongs presents a fine overview of Ozark performers and their traditions.

*Not Far From Here* is, without a doubt, an excellent collection which provides a sampling of Ozark narrative and song traditions and an intelligent guide to folklore study. There are, however, a few curious omissions. While the notes to the collection are useful and intelligent, they include no specific citations to any but Randolph's works and no bibliography. Thus, for example, we can read with interest the commentary on Phillips Barry's "extensive study" of "The Rattlesnake Song" and G. Malcolm Law's objections to that study, but we are left entirely to our own devices to find these discussions. The notes do not include any information beyond the names of the two authors. Even a bibliography of references for West's and McNeil's informative commentaries would be of help. Simi-

larly, a professional folklorist would like more specific information on the places and dates of the recordings. (I also am curious as to the identity of the unnamed bass player who accompanies Bob Blair on "The Big Crap Game.") Admittedly, folklorists and university professors are more interested in such bibliographic and collecting information than are the elementary and secondary teachers to whom *Not Far From Here* is directed; however, one regrets any limitations on such a fine representation of folk traditions.

With clarity and intelligence George West and William McNeil have put together a recording which not only successfully surveys the complex narrative and song traditions of the Arkansas Ozarks, but also presents coherently and engagingly some of the most important ideas in folklore scholarship. *Not Far From Here* makes available in sound recording folk traditions which, until now, one could find only in books or back in the Ozarks. This album succeeds as do the very best folklore collections; it renders accurately and with understanding people and their traditions. Indeed, *Not Far From Here: Traditional Tales and Songs Recorded in the Arkansas Ozarks* is a superb collection.

--Dianne Dugaw  
University of California  
Los Angeles, California



*JUBILEE TO GOSPEL: A Selection of Commercially Recorded Black Religious Music 1921-1953* (JEMF 108). Selected and annotated by William H. Tallmadge in a 16-page illustrated booklet. Selections: Wings Over Jordan--*I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table* (sophisticated); Wiseman Sextette--*I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray* (folk-styled); Utica Institute Jubilee Singers--*Oh Mary Don't You Weep* (jazz-styled); Virginia Female Singers--*I Heard the Preaching of the Elders* (trained-folk-jazz-styled); Cornfed Four--*Waitin' at the Gate* (folk-styled); The Golden Gate Quartet--*Jonah* (cool); Norfolk Jazz Quartet--*Swinging the Blues* (hot); Bill Landford Four--*You Ain't Got Faith* (cool); Heavenly Gospel Singers--*This Old World's in a Bad Condition* (hot); The Georgia Peach [Clara Hudmon]--*Do Lord Send Me*; Selah Jubilee Singers--*I Want Jesus to Walk around My Bedside*; Alphabetical Four--*Precious Lord Hold My Hand* [*Take My Hand Precious Lord*]; The Fairfield Four--*Love Like a River*.

*Jubilee to Gospel*, as the album title implies, is designed to demonstrate the stylistic changes in recorded black American religious choir and quartet singing between 1921 and 1953. It is also intended to serve as a reference point for stylistic distinctions within these grossly underdocumented genres. Twelve of the recordings were made before 1943, the remaining four after the Second World War.

William H. Tallmadge, who made the selections, has also written an important essay, defining the finer points of these singing styles, which is published in the sixteen-page self-covered booklet accompanying the album. Biographical notes on some of the performers and a discography of related recordings, both compiled by Doug Seroff, are also contained in the booklet.

I use Tallmadge's stylistic definitions in the album contents (above) to describe each performance. Where there are no sub-definitions, Tallmadge has provided none: he considers such styles relate to gospel performance which is not the primary concern of this collection; devoted as it is to the transition from Jubilee to Gospel.

Tallmadge's notes trace the origin and development of "reconstructed" jubilee spiritual singing by Afro-American groups from the inception of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers in 1871 and the adoption, from that point of jubilee as a descriptive musical term. The folk--"befo' de war"--style of spiritual--as printed in W. F. Allen, L. McKim Garrison and C. P. Ware, *Slave Songs of the United States* [New York: A. Simpson, 1867], and represented in several albums of field recordings--is not dealt with.

Tallmadge observes that the first significant collection of jubilee spirituals was published in 1872 (no author, *Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University* [New York: Bigelow & Main]). This contains twenty-four items. It was followed two years later by Thomas P. Fenner's *Cabin and Plantation Songs as Sung by the Hampton Students* (Virginia: The Institute Press) which has fifty-one selections. These two publications constitute the principal late nineteenth-century record of such music consulted by Tallmadge. Unfortunately, like the sheet music of early ragtime, the jubilee collections do not show nuances of Afro-American performance styles; nuances which have proved continually difficult to notate within a western musical format.

J. Rosamund Johnson's *Utica Jubilee Singers Spirituals* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1930 or 1933--both dates are quoted in the notes)--containing thirty-eight items--is the third primary printed source consulted by Tallmadge in his analysis. He notes an improvement in transcriptions over the preceding nineteenth-century publications. This observation is based on the incidence of a percentage increase

in the notation of lowered thirds, fifths, and sevenths according to European scales. Tallmadge accepts that a high proportion of lowered thirds, fifths, and sevenths are a recognized norm in all forms of Afro-American music.

Authenticity in the performance of "slave songs" was looked down upon by educated blacks as being a negative reflection of slavery and as the early black University/Institute jubilee singers aspired to white recognition, their performances were aimed at and conditioned by the standard of European "art" music. This is the substance of Tallmadge's "trained" jubilee quartet (and choir) style. Notwithstanding, it would seem from evidence that Tallmadge presents there is a case for some Afro-American retentions (however small) in the performances of such groups--not least the folk-based spirituals which they sang. Unfortunately, no mention is made as to the popularity of trained jubilee groups within the black community. The picture of their influence on subsequent black quartet music is, therefore, incomplete; although one can surmise that the trained jubilee style was the focus for ensuing developments.

As he points out, despite the wealth of titles released on 78-rpm discs, very few pre-1942 quartet recordings have been reissued on long-playing records. Tallmadge cites just six albums that contain reissue examples of such performances and although the total is somewhat higher than this it is insignificant in comparison with the number of album reissues of pre-War blues which have been produced over the last twenty years.

It would seem that trained jubilee quartets were the first to have been recorded in depth. They are most readily exemplified by the Fisk University Jubilee Quartet and the Tuskegee Institute Singers, reissued in Samuel Charters's 1962 compilation *An Introduction to Gospel Song* (RBF, RF5).

Virtually all such groups (Tallmadge cites six different quartets and a choir) are excluded from the standard discography: J. Godrich and R.M.W. Dixon, comps., *Blues and Gospel Records, 1902-1942* (London: Storyville, 1969). This lack of discographical information causes extreme difficulties in obtaining an overall picture of the development of religious quartet singing. Choir recordings, with a few notable exceptions, are also excluded from this discography and the same difficulties apply.

Jubilee choirs, according to Tallmadge, were not much recorded and his three sub-divisions, *trained*, *folk*, and *sophisticated*, are only tentative. The trained choir styles, he points out, can be heard in the Pace Jubilee Singers's selection in *An Introduction to Gospel Song* (RF5); sophisticated and folk-styled examples are included in this collection.

For Jubilee quartets, he defines three distinct sub-styles: *trained*, *jazz-styled*, *folk-styled*. These definitions are self-explanatory and, as with all his distinctions can be aurally identified by listening to the album. Unfortunately, Tallmadge does not state the size of the sample on which he has made these observations but, judging by references in his text, he has studied material recorded by at least seventeen groups, comprising forty-seven recordings in the jubilee quartet genre.

Discographies of most jazz-styled and folk-styled groups are included in *Blues and Gospel Records*. Accepting Tallmadge's classifications, however, certain groups, some who recorded in more than one sub-style, are excluded. Take, for example, the Utica Institute Jubilee Singers. According to Tallmadge, this quartet recorded in all three sub-categories but the compilers of *Blues and Gospel Records* reject them with the statement "This Victor and ARC group offers nothing suggestive of the Negro."

Tallmadge observes that, over a period, many groups of long-standing performed in more than one of his classifications. In this respect, the most interesting item in the collection is the Birmingham Jubilee Singers's "I Heard the Preaching of the Elders," a performance which crosses several stylistic barriers.

Within Tallmadge's next transitional category, "Jubilee-Gospel Quartets," the Golden Gate Quartet is also excluded from *Blues and Gospel Records* because "their work has little distinctively Negroid content, being aimed mainly at the white market"; yet this group was certainly very popular with black audiences, their early records being issued in the Bluebird "race series."

All this points up the stylistic problems faced by discographers when deciding "authenticity" of performance. It should be noted that the Golden Gate Quartet's recordings are included in the third edition of *Blues and Gospel Records*, to be published shortly.

As with the Jubilee definitions, Tallmadge does not note the size of his sample for the two subdivisions of his Jubilee-Gospel Quartet style--cool and hot (these terms parallel jazz parlance). Some idea can again be obtained by assessing references in his text: seven groups and ten selections. This seems a very small sample and it is assumed that a greater number of recordings were listened to before distinctions were drawn.

Tallmadge's third transitional quartet style "Gospel-Jubilee" is, in his words, "characterized by the predominance of an elementary (white) form of gospel response...the increasing use of composed gospel songs instead of spirituals or textual redactions of spirituals, the increasing use of instrument, some use of soul singing and a greater tendency towards instrumentalized vocal timbre, particu-

larly in the bass part." There are four examples of this style, three recorded before 1943 (two of these are listed in *Blues and Gospel Records*, the third, by Georgia Peach, was not known to have been recorded prior to 1943).

Tallmadge uses as the starting point for his analysis the PhD thesis findings of George Ricks (*Some Aspects of the Religious Music of the United States Negro*, 1960) and Richard Raichelson (*Black Religious Folksong: A Study in Generic and Social Change*, 1975), expanding their criteria and refining their distinctions. He adopts their practice of distinguishing nuances of accepted Afro-American musical forms by means of percentage comparisons. The percentage of such Afro-Americanisms are shown in relation to the musical works consulted. This is all well and good, except that distinctive Afro-American performance cannot be measured solely by the incidence of these musical norms; presentational style is of equal importance. Indeed, Afro-American church repertoire relied not only on jubilee-spirituals but also on white church music sung in a distinctively black manner. Also, as Tallmadge accepts, it is extremely difficult to measure Afro-American music against the scale of western notation. But, despite this, he bases much of his analysis on percentage observations founded on such scales. This is probably the only available method for studying early printed jubilee scores, but recordings allow a more sophisticated approach. Thus, the reasoning he uses for his distinctions may be subject to future questioning. Additionally, as I have already stated, the sizes of his samples are sometimes small and, therefore, there may be elements of doubt about his stylistic refinements.

I have dwelt on Tallmadge's essay because of the pioneering nature of his work. The album is greatly augmented by its inclusion, which should be reason enough to purchase the record. It remains, however, to comment on the selections. Obviously, they have been chosen to demonstrate Tallmadge's thesis; also to avoid duplication with other reissues. In this latter respect it is, therefore, unfortunate that the track by the Dunham Jubilee Singers is also included in Clanka Lanka's *Birmingham Quartet Anthology* (CL-144, 001/002).

Musically, *Jubilee to Gospel* is not so arresting as Clanka Lanka's magnificent selection. But, it has the advantage of covering a broader cross-section of styles and is, thus, more representative of the tradition. Tracks I find particularly appealing include the Wiseman Sextette's "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" (folk-styled) and the Cornfed Four's "Waitin' at the Gate" (folk-styled). The Birmingham Jubilee Singer's "I Heard the Preaching of the Elders" (trained folk-jazz-styled) is a fine performance as is the Golden Gate Quartet's exciting version of "Jonah" (cool), well up to the usual high standard of their early performances. The Dunham Jubilee Singer's "I Dreamed of Judgment Morning" is an excellent "hot" presentation, topped only by the superlative "This Old World's in a Terrible Condition" (hot) by the Heavenly Gospel Singers. The Selah Jubilee Singers are favorites of mine and their "I Want Jesus to Walk Around My Bedside" is a distinctive, almost delicate, arrangement. The final track, "Love Like a River" by the Fairfield Four, is also a powerful rendition and a fitting conclusion to an album which, by virtue of its pioneering nature, let alone its comprehensive documentation, should be in every representative collection of North American folk and popular music.

--John Cowley  
Hertfordshire, England



**MINSTRELS & TUNESMITHS: THE COMMERCIAL ROOTS OF EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC** (JEMF 109). Eighteen selections by various artists of recordings from 1902 to 1923. Selections: Don Richardson--Mississippi Sawyer; Dan W. Quinn--Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill; Len Spencer & Charles D'Almaine--The Arkansas Traveler; Uncle Josh (Cal Stewart)--Ticklish Reuben; Bentley Ball--The Dying Cowboy; Golden & Marlowe--Listen to the Mockingbird; Henry Burr (Harry McClaskey)--When You and I Were Young, Maggie; Tuskegee Institute Singers--I Want to be Ready; George P. Watson--Sleep, Baby, Sleep; Arthur Collins and others--Minstrels; Harry C. Browne, Peerless Quartette--Hear dem Bells; Kitty Cheatham & Vess L. Ossman--Scandalize My Name, Satidy Night, Georgia Buck; Fred Van Eps--Turkey in the Straw Medley; May Irwin--The Bully; Golden & Marlowe--She's a Dandy; Carroll C. Clark, Vess L. Ossman--De Little Old Log Cabin in de Lane; Golden & Heins--Good and Bad; Wendell Hall--It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'. Illustrated 35-page booklet by Norm Cohen.

The first thing I should point out is that there is a certain conflict of interest which makes me less than normally qualified to review this collection. I have been an enthusiastic supporter of the idea behind it since its inception, and I've also been marginally involved in some areas of its production too, but that won't stop me from leveling a few words of criticism along with enthusiastic praise.

Norm Cohen is the producer and editor of this album, which springs from a long and extensively pursued interest in the origins of country music. He is dissatisfied with the older standard folk-

lorists's theories of folk music being exclusively derived from oral tradition, without input from the wider world of mass culture. In the fat (obese, really) booklet accompanying this record, he makes an important and, I think, unarguable assertion: "It doesn't matter where a particular song or tune originated: what does matter is what has become of it. I favor the definition of folk music as that music whose survival does not depend on commercial media." In other words, a song's origins may lie within the wider spectrum of popular music, but if it survives commercial dissemination and finds its way into oral tradition, it becomes folksong.

To underscore the point, this collection gathers together a number of commercial discs recorded from the turn of the century to 1923, the year of John Carson's first waxes. The material represents almost the widest possible spectrum of folk and soon-to-be folk material derivable, with the exception of some material which was omitted because it is currently available elsewhere. Vaudeville, Tin Pan Alley and minstrelsy were the sources of most material on records in those early days and they had to do with most of what is reproduced here. Relatively few items (like "Georgia Buck," "I Want to be Ready," "The Dying Cowboy," and "Mississippi Sawyer") managed to find their way onto early recordings without being filtered in varying degrees through these agents. I should point out that most items were chosen for documentary rather than stylistic value; for my own part, I enjoy early recordings for their inherent antiquarian charm, but a listener whose tastes are firmly rooted in a "country" approach to country music may be somewhat less enthralled.

But even hard-core fans will quite likely find some entertaining and revealing items. Harry C. Browne's voice and banjo reveal some undeniably southern roots, and his delivery is robust and relatively unprocessed in comparison with Arthur Collins and Billy Golden. The latter appears with a banjo-playing partner, Jim Marlowe, whose work is a foretaste of Uncle Dave Macon, of whom he is an older contemporary. Best of all is Kitty Cheatham, Nashville-born and obviously at home with southern traditional song. "Scandalize My Name" is sung unaccompanied, with convincing ornamental melismatics; her other--too short--tunes are only slightly less successful because Vess L. Ossman's banjo playing isn't quite equal to the task.

Even if the record is played only once, your purchase will be well justified by the hefty and first-rate booklet accompanying the record. There's as much detail crammed into it as you'll find in a couple of issues of this journal, and it's generously larded with vintage photos, record company propaganda reproductions and the like. Norm Cohen has written a long introductory and definition-seeking essay, followed by extensive notes and biblio/discographies for each selection, which attempt to locate the song's origins. Norm has been sleuthing these old songs for years, and there's a lot of painstaking research evident in the results. Of course there are errors, the kind which always creep in when one tries to organize a mountain of data as large as this one, which keep showing up even after the material has been proofread a dozen times. Most are trivial: the two of consequence both have to do with singer Kitty Cheatham, whose important early unaccompanied version of "Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John" is mentioned in connection with the track on which she is featured, but not cited in the discography accompanying "I Want to be Ready," which is merely an alternate title for the same hymn. And her "Scandalize My Name" has a connection with the semi-hymn "Do You Call that Religion?" (later recorded by such diverse figures as Joshua White and the Monroe Brothers).

Serious omissions? Well, hardly; and they're the biggest ones I could find after a thorough reading of the booklet, which managed to tell me dozens more things I did not know. One further item: the transfers from these early records is remarkably clean; they reveal a surprising degree of studio presence in several of the early items.

This is the kind of record-book package which nobody does like JEMF, which is just about the only outfit around willing to tackle such a difficult area so creditably, even at the risk of what will likely be very unprofitable sales figures. If I've managed to infect you with even a little enthusiasm, let it be translated into a purchase, so that JEMF will continue to have the wherewithal to explore this and related music topics in the future.

--Richard K. Spottswood  
Silver Spring, Maryland

[JEMF 109 has been nominated for a Grammy in the "Historical Reissue" category--Ed.]



THE ORIGINAL PIONEER TRIO SINGS SONGS OF THE HILLS AND PLAINS (AFM 731). Sixteen selections from Standard Radio transcriptions recorded in 1934 and 1935 by the Sons of the Pioneers in Hollywood, California. Titles: *Cowboy's Nightherd Song*, *Railroad Boomer*, *Nancy Till*, *Black Sheep Blues*, *Cider Schottische*, *When You and I were Young*, *Maggie*, *When the Bees are in the Hive*, *Dear Old Western Skies*, *Hadie Brown*, *At the End of the Lane*, *Gentle Nettie Moore*, *When the Work's all Done this Fall*, *Prairie Whing Ding*, *Leaning on the Everlasting Arm*, *Down the Lane to Happiness*, *Sweet Genevieve*. Produced by Ken and Nora Griffis; 16-page illustrated booklet by Linda L. Painter.

The sixteen selections compiled for this record by Ken and Nora Griffis provide an excellent cross-section of early, vintage Pioneer material. During the brief period that the Pioneers recorded the Standard Radio transcriptions the group was still very much in a formative stage; Roy Rogers, Bob Nolan, and Tim Spencer had only finally come together as a trio in 1933, and fiddler Hugh Farr joined the group in 1934. His brother, guitarist Karl Farr, actually became a member part way through the recording of the Standard transcriptions. The music recorded was fresh, new, and exciting, and this comes across in the band's exuberance and obvious enjoyment of what they were doing. In addition to the beautiful, tight harmony singing of Rogers, Nolan, and Spencer, we are treated to four cuts that feature the yodeling of Rogers, one of the best yodelers ever to record. We are also favored with two fiddle tunes by Hugh Farr, whose jazz-influenced fiddling added so much to the Pioneer sound. (For more hot fiddle from Hugh Farr, get JEMF LP#107: *The Farr Brothers: Texas Crapshooter*.) It is also interesting to hear a selection of pieces that are either traditional or old standards rather than the more usual offering of later compositions by the Pioneers, especially Spencer and Nolan.

Linda Painter has contributed an excellent sixteen-page booklet of notes that contains historical material, photos, lyrics, and discographical information. Especially interesting are her extensive and informative comments on transcription discs, the transcription recording and use process, as well as background on Standard Radio specifically.

The album is an excellent complement to the currently available Pioneer material, and will be welcomed by all Sons of the Pioneers aficionados and lovers of western music.

--Charlie Seemann  
Country Music Foundation  
Nashville, Tennessee



**SONS OF THE PIONEERS** (Columbia FC 37439). Reissue of ten selections originally recorded 1937. Titles: Song of the Bandit, At the Rainbow's End, Hold that Critter Down, When the Golden Train Comes Down, Cajon Stomp, You Must Come in at the Door, The Devil's Great Grandson, Cowboy Night Herd Song, Send Him Home to Me, The Touch of God's Hand. Back liner notes by Fred Goodwin.

**GENE AUTRY** (Columbia FC 37465). Reissue of ten selections originally recorded 1935-45; vocals by Autry with unidentified instrumental back-up. Titles: Tumbling Tumbleweeds, I'll Go Ridin' Down that Old Texas Trail, It Makes No Difference Now, There's a New Moon Over My Shoulder, Amapola, Ridin' Down the Canyon, Deep in the Heart of Texas, Same Old Fashioned Girl, (There's Nothing Like a) Good Old-Fashioned Hoedown, Don't Fence Me In. Back liner notes by Douglas B. Green.

**BOB WILLS** (Columbia FC 37468). Reissue of ten selections originally recorded 1935-47 by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. Titles: Right or Wrong, Lyla Lou, Dusty Skies, Cowboy Stomp, Cherokee Maiden, Cotton Eyed Joe, My Life's Been a Pleasure, Away Out There, I Ain't Got Nobody, Please Don't Leave Me. Back liner notes by Bob Pinson.

**SPADE COOLEY** (Columbia FC 37467). Reissue of ten selections originally recorded 1944-46 by Spade Cooley and his Orchestra. Titles: Shame on You, Troubled Over You, Oklahoma Stomp, Hide Your Face, Steel Guitar Rag, Detour, You Can't Break My Heart, Crazy 'Cause I Love You, I Can't Help the Way You Feel, Swinging the Devil's Dream. Back liner notes by Jimmy Wakely.

**LEFTY FRIZZELL** (Columbia FC 37466). Reissue of ten selections originally recorded 1950-57. Titles: I Love You a Thousand Ways, Cold Feet, I Want to be With You Always, Mama!, Always Late (with Yur Kisses), I'm an Old, Old Man Trying to Live While I can, Forever (and Always), Heart's Highway, King Without a Queen, No One to Talk to (but the Blues). Back liner notes by Douglas B. Green.

Unlike RCA Victor, with its successful Vintage Series and then shorter-lived Bluebird Series, Columbia Records has never had an extensive, well-integrated reissue program that included country music in its scope. Numerous country reissues did appear in the 1960s on the low-priced Harmony label, but little care or thoughtful programming was evident in those products. These albums (a *Flatt and Scruggs*, Co FC 37469, will be reviewed separately), subtitled the Columbia Historic Edition, may portend a new and continuing reissue program, but their gaudy, multicolored jackets suggest more

than they deliver. It's true the transfers are quite acceptable (no artificial stereo), discographical information provided for most of the selections, and each album contains at least a couple of previously-unissued titles (underlined in the listings above); but the minimal liner notes (250-500 words) and the limit of only ten selections per album are disappointing.

Word has it that this series came about through the importuning of a devoted Sons of the Pioneers fan, who kept urging the folks at CBS's Nashville office to put out a SOP reissue. CBS approached the staff of the Country Music Foundation in Nashville for help in producing a reissue. The plan soon grew into the six albums now available. The project calls for a second batch of four albums to be released soon. A guiding principle in the selections of all the LPs has been to confine the material to items originally recorded in the twenty-five years between 1935 and 1960. It had been hoped, in the preparation of the Columbia Historic Editions, to solicit the cooperation of the artists themselves--or someone very closely associated with the artists--to write the liner notes. This admirable idea did not work so well in practice, as I have already suggested. Evidently CBS did not have good luck in getting big name artists to write quality liner notes. In some cases, eleventh hour decisions to call in another annotator were made, which also did not contribute to high quality notes.

The Sons of the Pioneers recorded one year for Columbia relatively early in their career, when Roy Rogers was still with the group. This was after their first contract with Decca, and before their move to RCA. Other members were Bob Nolan, Lloyd Perryman, and the Farr Brothers (with Pat Brady on bass and Sam Koki, steel guitar, added on one of the three sessions). Most of the selections are typical Bob Nolan western song compositions, except for the spiritual "You Must Come in at the Door" and the extraordinary instrumental "Cajon Stomp," both of which are alternate, previously-unissued takes. "The Devil's Great Grandson," with fine yodeling by Rogers, is a ballad in the spirit of "Strawberry Roan." None of the selections was previously available on LP.

The Gene Autry selections are from the period in his career when he had given up the country songs and Jimmie Rodgers style of the late 1920s and early 30s and turned to cowboy and western themes, in keeping with his film career. In the mid-1940s he returned to country love songs and pop novelty pieces (like "Rudolf") which ultimately became his greatest hits. The album opens with the Gene Autry Trio (Autry, Jimmy Long, and Smiley Burnette) "cover" of the Sons of the Pioneers's "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," recorded a bare four months after the Pioneers's version. The Autry version is with the original arrangement rather than the more familiar one.

The Bob Wills LP is a good selection from the dozen years that he was with Columbia—1935 to 1947—except for the absence of any blues or latin pieces, both of which were important parts of Wills's recorded repertoire. None of the selections has been previously reissued on LP, and one piece has not been issued in any form. There are some fine Tommy Duncan vocals here, including the 1920s pop hit, "I Ain't Got Nobody," and the Cindy Walker composition repopularized in 1976 by Merle Haggard, "Cherokee Maiden." The wonderful version of "Cotton Eyed Joe" is the source of the New Lost City Ramblers's rendition.

Whether Bob Wills or Spade Cooley was really the king of western swing will probably continue to be debated by western music enthusiasts and fans. On this and the Wills album, the styles of the two bands are not so far apart as they might seem to be if a different Wills repertoire were selected for comparison. The Cooley band, however, is still somewhat more uptown in its arrangements, with more pop-sounding vocals, and triple unison fiddles that are beginning to sound like 101 strings. For a real uptempo version of "Devil's Dream," the Cooley arrangement is hard to beat. Not much country left in it, though.

Lefty Frizzell was at the height of his popularity in 1950-53, but continued to make the lower end of the charts until the 1970s. This album includes some of his early hits ("I Love You a Thousand Ways" was No. 5 in 1950; "I Want to be with You Always" and "Always Late" were each No. 1 in 1950; "I'm an Old, Old Man" was No. 3 in 1952; "Forever" was No. 6 in 1952).

—Norm Cohen



**THOSE RAGTIME BANJOS** (Folkways FBF 40). Sixteen instrumental selections recorded by various artists between 1905 and 1951. Selections: Fred Van Eps—*Chatterbox Rag*, *Grace and Beauty* (with Frank Banta), *Teasin' the Cat*; Vess L. Ossman—*Florida Rag*, *Buffalo Rag*, *Persian Lamb Rag*; Eddie Ross—*Ross' Dog Trot*, *Ross' Reel*; Pete Mandell—*Get Goin'*; Roy Smeck and Art Kahn—*The Ghost of the Banjo*, *Banjokes*; Len Fillis & Sid Bright—*Banjoviality*, *Butterfingers*; Harry Reser & Henry Lange—*Symphonola*; Phil Russel—*Banjomania*; Dick Roberts & Red Roundtree—*That Banjo Rag*. Compiled and annotated, with two-page brochure insert, by David A. Jasen (1979).

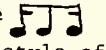
**EARLY SYNCOPATED DANCE MUSIC:** *Cakewalks, Two-Steps, Trots and Glides* (Folkways RBF 37). Reissue of sixteen instrumental selections by various bands originally recorded between 1902 and 1922. Selections: *One Step Instruction*; *Sousa's Band*--At a Georgia Camp Meeting; *Columbia Orchestra*--*Smoky Mokes*; *Metropolitan Orchestra*--*Creole Belles*; *Prince's Band*--*King Chanticleer*; *Zonophone Concert Band*--*Kerry Mills Ragtime Dance*; *Pryor's Band*--*Kentucky Kut Up*, *The Minstrel Band*, *Grizzly Bear*; *Walter B. Rogers Band*--*Gertrude Hoffman Glide*, *Too Much Mustard*; *Military Band*--*Everybody Two-Step*, *The Horse Trot*; *Conway's Band*--*Bon Ton One Step*; *Jim Europe's Hell Fighters*--*The Dancing Deacon*; *Original Memphis Five*--*Bees Knees*. Compiled and annotated, with six-page brochure, by David A. Jasen (1978).

**EARLY BAND RAGTIME** (Folkways RBF-38). Reissue of seventeen instrumental selections by various bands recorded mostly before 1920. Selections: *U. S. Marine Band*--*Maple Leaf Rag*; *Pryor's Band*--*Dill Pickles, Pickles & Peppers*, *Whitewash Man*, *Temptation Rag*, *Southern Beauties Rag*; *Zonophone Concert Band*--*Smiler Rag*; *Walter B. Rogers Orchestra*--*Black & White Rag*, *Banana Peel Rag*, *Ragamuffin Rag*; *Zonophone Orchestra*--*Wild Cherries*, *Sweetmeats*; *Hager's Orchestra*--*Carpet Rags*; *Prince's Band*--*Cabaret Rag*; *Black Diamonds Band*--*Powder Rag*; Anonymous groups--*Les Copeland's Rag*, *Honolulu Rag*. Compiled and annotated, with four-page brochure, by David A. Jasen (1979).

**LATE BAND RAGTIME** (Folkways RBF 39). Reissue of sixteen instrumental selections by various bands and orchestras between 1923 and 1956. Selections: *Broadway Dance Orchestra*--*Ragging the Scale*; *Isham Jones Orchestra*--*Dog on the Piano*; *Sam Lanin Orchestra*--*Doll Dance*; *Ben Bernie Orchestra*--*Cannon Ball Rag*; *Deauville Dance Band*--*Magic Notes*; *Seger Ellis Orchestra*--*Shivery Stomp*; *Ozzie Nelson Orchestra*--*Maple Leaf Rag*; *Lu Watters' Yehba Buena Jazz Band*--*Maple Leaf Rag*; *Benny Strickler w/Yerba Buena Jazz Band*--*Kansas City Stomp*; *Pee Wee Hunt*--*12th Street Rag*; *Pee Wee Hunt w/Joe "Fingers" Carr*--*Fourth Man Rag*; *Bill Williams Band*--*Maple Leaf Rag*; *Pete Daily Band*--*Daily Rag*, *Gramophone Rag*; *Sid Phillips Band*--*Flapper Rag*; *Leroy Holmes & his Tug Boat Eight*--*Hey, Taxi*. Compiled and annotated, with three-page brochure, by David A. Jasen (1979).

**RAGTIME PIANO NOVELTIES OF THE 20's** (Folkways RBF 42). Reissue of thirteen instrumental selections recorded mostly in the 1920s by various artists. Selections: *Patricia Rossborough*--*Slipova*; *Harry Jentes*--*The Cat's Pajamas*; *Sid Reinherz*--*Monkey Business*; *Henry Lange*--*Pianoflage*; *Stanley C. Holt*--*Ragman's Exercise*; *Frank Herbin*--*Nickel in the Slot*; *Harry Perella & Ray Turner*--*Nola*; *Pauline Alpert*--*Doll Dance*; *Billy Mayerl*--*Rag Doll*; *Willard Robison*--*Out of the South*; *Cecil Norman*--*Dusting the Keys*; *Al Siegel*--*Polly*; *Jack Wilson*--*Dancing Dolls*. Compiled and annotated, with three-page brochure, by David A. Jasen (1981).

David A. Jasen has compiled a discography of ragtime recordings (*Recorded Ragtime, 1897-1958*, Archon Books, 1973), co-authored a history of the music (*Rags and Ragtime, A Musical History*, by Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, Seabury Press, 1978), issued recordings of his own ragtime playing (and compositions) on piano, and compiled over a dozen reissue LPs for Folkways. These five albums are at hand for review, but are not necessarily the best or most important of the lot.

It is difficult to offer a definition of ragtime music that will satisfy most practitioners, scholars, collectors, and fans. Jason's own definition, offered in his book, *Recorded Ragtime*, is "the syncopation of an entire melodic strain combined with a continuously even rhythm" (p. 2). In other words, while one voice (e.g., the left hand on the piano) is laying down a metrical rhythm, the other (right hand) is performing a syncopated melody against it. Part of the problem in definition is in the term *syncopation* itself. The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* defines it as any deviation from the normal, or expected, rhythm. But what is expected? So in a sense, syncopation is a culture-relative term. Jason and others who use a similar definition avoid most of the problem by defining the syncopation implicitly as a deviation from the rhythm of the metrically regular second voice (left hand). The classical ragtime of the Scott Joplin era is relatively easy to recognize and define--in particular, the characteristic syncopated phrases tend to be of a very few sorts, repeated over and over--e.g., the phrase . Other kinds of music that are called ragtime by some are as different from the Joplin-style of music as many blues pieces are from the music of W. C. Handy.

Jason himself distinguishes eight types of ragtime music: (1) the early syncopated cakewalks; (2) the folk rags from the rural midwest and south; (3) the "classic" or St. Louis ragtime of Joplin, Scott, and Lamb; (4) the Tin Pan Alley ragtime--infusions of raggy syncopation in the songs of the New York professional tunesmiths in imitation of the more original St. Louis ragtime; (5) New Orleans, or Jelly Roll Rags, developed in New Orleans and showing some influence from African and European musical idioms; (6) midwestern rags, by the generation that followed the Joplin school; (7) stride rags, by the East Coast pianists, influenced by church spirituals as well as city vaudeville; and (8) novelty rags, written in the 1920s to showcase the technical virtuosity of the pianists of the day.

These different styles having been thus noted, it should be pointed out that the several albums being reviewed do not necessarily fit into one of the eight categories. *Those Ragtime Banjos* is distinguished principally by the lead instrument. In the early years of recorded ragtime, though the piano may have been the favored instrument in live performances, it could not be recorded well with the relatively primitive acoustic recording technology. The banjo, on the other hand, with its sharp, ringing tones, loud volume, and small sound source, did record well, and consequently was a favored instrument before electrical recording was invented in the 1920s. Before the 1920s, the two most popular and talented banjoists were Fred Van Eps and Vess L. Ossman, both of whom recorded extensively. They, and other banjoists of that period, used the five-string banjo, which gradually gave way to the four-string tenor and plectrum banjos in the 1920s. Black Face Eddie Ross, on the four-string banjo, exemplifies the change taking place at the time of his two recordings included on this disc, made in 1921. Side Two of the album, featuring recordings made mostly between 1923 and 1927, illustrates the trend continuing into the jazz decade.

*Early Syncopated Dance Music* represents the earliest of Jason's eight categories of ragtime. The cakewalk, Jasen notes, was the first popular dance to be accompanied by a syncopated melody. The cakewalk was a negro dance of the nineteenth century, popularized on the minstrel and vaudeville stages in the late 1800s, in particular in the Broadway musicals of Bert Williams and George Walker in the mid-nineties. It soon became fashionable among the upper social strata, taking its place alongside the waltz, polka, and two-step. Two of the most popular turn-of-the-century cakewalks, "At a Georgia Camp Meeting" and "Creole Belles," both became popular with hillbilly stringbands in the early 1900s. Other titles on Side One of the disc are also cakewalks and two-steps (which is the way most cakewalks were advertised at the time) of the early 1900s. Side Two concentrates on the next decade, with trots, glides, and one-steps. Of particular interest is an unusual Columbia One Step Instruction record--originally a promotional give-away to lure the older generation onto the modern ballroom floor.

*Early Band Ragtime* features selections recorded between approximately 1908 and 1917 by various orchestras and bands. Side One is devoted to the big hits of ragtime's first decade (1899-1909); Side Two is devoted to "obscure rags rarely recorded" from the same period. Three of the rags on Side One have entered the hillbilly repertoire: "Maple Leaf," "Dill Pickles," and "Black and White."

*Late Band Ragtime*'s contents reflect the gradual transformation of ragtime music from a performance genre to a dance music genre in the 1920s: the performances on Side One of this album are almost all popular dance orchestras of the day. Side Two illustrates the takeover of ragtime by the Dixieland bands. Several of the selections on this LP would not be classed as ragtime by all knowledgeable listeners. Besides "Maple Leaf," represented on this LP by three renditions, the only piece to enter the country music repertoire was the immensely popular "Twelfth Street Rag."

*Ragtime Piano Novelties* is one LP devoted to one of Jasen's eight stylistic categories--the last phase of ragtime. Some of the expected giants--Zez Confrey, Roy Bargy, Rube Bloom--are not represented among the performances on this disc because Jasen has already devoted full albums to them (*Zez Confrey*, RBF-28; *Roy Bargy*, RBF-35; *Rube Bloom and Arthur Schutt*, RBF-41). Few of the novelty rags had any impact on country music; the music was just not conveniently transposable to string instruments.

In general, all of these albums are interesting; the quality of sound reproduction is generally good, considering the vintage of the source material. The notes are rather skimpy, but perhaps this is because Jasen has already said most of what he has to say about ragtime music elsewhere.

--N.C.



*INDIANA RAGTIME: A DOCUMENTARY ALBUM* (Indiana Historical Society IHS 1001). Double-LP boxed set containing thirty-three selections by Indiana composers published between 1905 and 1929 and recorded between 1910 and 1981. Produced and annotated, with 28-page color-illustrated booklet, by John Edward Hasse and Frank J. Gillis. Selections: Side A (all solo piano or banjo): *Wizzle Dazzle*, *Sapho Rag*, *Hot House Rag*, *Scarlet Rag*, *Mr. Crump Rag*, *Dusty Rag*, *Spring-Time Rag*, *Angel Food Rag*; Side B (piano rolls): *Hoosier Rag*, *That Demon Rag*, *Purdue Rag*, *Red Rambler Rag*, *Orinoco*, *Klassicle Rag*, *Love Dreams*, *Pride of the Smoky Row*, *Little Bit of Rag*; Side C (all by Indiana University Ragtime Orchestra): *Winter Garden Rag*, *Red Onion Rag*, *The Minstrel Man*, *Daphne*, *That Eccentric Rag*, *Walhalla*, *Thriller Rag*, *Richmond Rag*; Side D (various bands): *The Minstrel Band*, *Spring-Time Rag*, *Eccentric*, *Manhattan Rag*, *Thriller Rag*, *Hoosier Rag*, *Whirlwind Rag*, *Dusty Rag*. (Indiana Historical Society, 315 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis, IN 46202; \$14).

What the preceding group of LPs lack in annotation is lavishly made up for by this handsome production, the winner of one of the 1982 annual ASCAP Deems Taylor awards. The thesis of the album (and the subject of Hasse's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Creation and Dissemination of Indiana Ragtime, 1897-1930") is that Indianapolis's role as the fourth (or fifth) leading producer of ragtime music and a center of ragtime activity behind only Missouri and New York has long been overlooked. The proof consists of these examples by Indiana composers--Harry Bell, Opal Boyer, Hoagy Carmichael, Joseph F. Cohen, Forest L. Cook, Cecil Duane Cragg, Albert Gumble, Sophus Jergensen, Lloyd L. Johnson, Julia Lee Niebergall, Paul Pratt, J. Russel Robinson, and Russell Smith; and by composers who had settled in Indiana--Joseph M. Wilcockson, Albert F. Marzian, and Jesse Crump.

The recordings include reissues from previously recorded 78s and LPs, piano rolls, and orchestral recordings made expressly for this set. The reissues from 78s include "The Minstrel Band" by Arthur Pryor's Band (recorded 1910); "Spring-Time Rag" by Vic Meyers Orchestra (1924); "Eccentric" by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (1922); "Manhattan Rag" by Irving Mills and his Hotsy Totsy Gang; "The Thriller Rag" by Bunk Johnson's Jazz Band (1942); and "Mr. Crump Rag" by Jesse Crump (1923). Reissues from LPs include "Spring-Time Rag" by Wally Rose; "Angel Food Rag" by Joe "Fingers" Carr; "Whirlwind Rag" by Tony Parenti and His Ragtime Gang; "Sapho Rag" by "Knocky" Parker; and "Dusty Rag" by Turk Murphy's Jazz Band.

The brochure, lavishly illustrated with photographs and color sheet-music cover reproductions, discusses Indiana and Indianapolis during the ragtime era, with emphasis on the musical activity of the day; and presents biographical sketches of all the composers. Notes on each of the musical selections include historical data as well as technical discussions of the musical structure and distinctive characteristics. The final two pages of the brochure give credits and acknowledgements and a bibliography and brief discography of LPs that include other recordings of Indiana rags. .

The musical examples themselves tend to be rather genteel presentations--an observation which is consistent with (though perhaps unrelated to) the fact that all but two of the performers were white. Exceptions are Crump's rousing 1923 recording of his own composition, "Mr. Crump Rag," recorded at Gennett Studios and issued privately; Bunk Johnson's Band; and the West-Coast ragtime revival style of Turk Murphy's band on "Dusty Rag." The latter, by the way, makes an interesting comparison with Frank Gillis's solo piano interpretation of the same composition. The transfers from 78s of the older items is remarkably clean.

--N.C.

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*NOBODY AND OTHER SONGS: THE STORY OF BERT WILLIAMS* (Folkways RF 602). Reissue of fourteen selections featuring vocals by Bert Williams with orchestral accompaniment, originally recorded between 1913 and 1920 by Columbia. Selections: *Nobody*, *Somebody*, *Ten Little Bottles*, *O Death Where is Thy Sting?*, *I'm Neutral*, *I'm Gonna Quit Saturday*, *Bring Back Those Wonderful Days*, *You Can't Get Away from It*, *I Want to Know Where Tosti Went*, *Twenty Years*, *He's a Cousin of Mine*, *The Moon Shines on the Moonshine*, *My Last Dollar*, *Unlucky Blues*. Compiled and annotated by Samuel B. Charters (1981). Six-page brochure insert.

Bert Williams died sixty years ago last March at only 47 years of age. One of the first black comedians to attain star status on the American stage, he left a vivid impression with the audiences that saw him and also with the other actors who performed with him. W. C. Fields, who worked with him in the Ziegfeld Follies and became a close friend, was quoted as saying, "Bert Williams is the funniest man I ever saw, and the saddest man I ever knew." Tall and fair-skinned (born, probably in the West Indies), Williams was dignified, poised, sensitive, and articulate off-stage, but on stage, forced to blacken his face with burnt cork because all blackface actors then had to regardless of natural pigmentation, he became a shuffling, inept "nigger," shabbily attired, awkward, ungainly. Keenly sensitive to the racial prejudices of the day, he worked in whatever ways he could to improve the opportunities open to black actors, and regarded his own success as a gain for all black people.

Between 1904 and 1922 he recorded some ninety sides for Columbia, Victor, and smaller companies, fourteen selected sides of which are reissued here. Although aural recordings cannot capture the three-dimensional impact that Williams allegedly had on stage, they do give testimony to his unmatched skills at delivery. His voice, for a singer, was poor, but he made up for it by the versatility of his spoken voice, and by his unexcelled mastery of well-timed delivery. Today, we can look back on a long legacy of comedians who have perfected the nuances of hesitations, inflections, stammers, and the like--including Jack Benny, Shelley Berman, Hennie Youngman, Mel Brooks, and others; but no comedians of the pre-World War I era come over on record with the skills that Williams demonstrates.

Whether this is because he was so much better than the others, or because others never mastered the skill of performing in front of an inanimate recording horn with as much enthusiasm as in front of a live audience, I don't know.

The record opens with "Nobody," a song he first performed in 1905 and which made such a hit that he was practically forced to include it in every performance of his for the next seventeen years. All of his repertoire was of a piece with his stage persona; they touch upon hard times, laziness, prohibition, poverty, infidelity, intoxication, religion. "O Death Where Is They Sting?" gets its title from a line spoken by the caricatured black protagonist after hearing the preacher warning about hell--how it is filled with gamblers, drinkers, and fallen women. "He's a Cousin of Mine" is the reply the faithless wife gives her betrayed husband when he catches her kissing another man. "My Last Dollar" is sort of a successor to "Nobody," in which he proclaims that when he is down and out and all that there is to save him from ruin is not friends and kin, but his last dollar. "I Want to Know Where Tosti Went" is a dig at Italian composer Tosti's "Addio" which was sweeping the country at the time, with its refrain of "Goodbye forever!"

"Nobody" is without doubt Williams's best known performance, and many country singers have recorded it, including Jerry Reed, Riley Shepard, and Merle Travis, not to mention country/pop singer Phil Harris. Reed and Harris have both also recorded another Williams favorite, "The Darktown Poker Club," and Harris has done also Williams's recitation, "Woodman Spare that Tree." (These three Harris songs are on Mega M51-5006: *Southern Comfort*; the two Reed covers are on RCA APL1-0356: *The Uptown Poker Club*.)

Williams's popularity long outlived him, and in the 1940s Columbia reissued eight of his most successful numbers recorded between 1918 and 1921 in a 78-rpm album. Listeners taken with this album can obtain another LP of Williams reissues: Sunbeam P-506, which includes fourteen selections, only five of which duplicate material on this Folkways album. The Sunbeam LP includes all of the selections reissued in the 1940s. Though the sound quality of both LPs is, generally, good, the Folkways album has by far the better documentation. One other Williams recording has been reissued: "Samuel," made in 1915, is on Rounder 4007: *Hard Times*.

An excellent source of information on Williams's life and career, and the source of most of the brochure notes to this album, is Ann Charters's *Nobody: The Story of Bert Williams* (Macmillan, 1970).

--N.C.



*LET'S PUT THE AXE TO THE AXIS: Songs of World War II*. Compiled by Samuel Charters (Folkways RF 610). Reissue of fourteen pop recordings made during World War II. Titles: *Let's Put the Axe to the Axis*, *The Sun Will Soon be Setting (For the Land of the Rising Sun)*, *I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen*, *Milkman Keep those Bottles Quiet*, *Mussolini's Letter to Hitler*, *Hitler's Reply to Mussolini*, *We Did it Before and We Can Do it Again*, *Goodbye Mama (I'm Off to Yokohama)*, *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings*, *Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition*, *First Class Private Mary Brown*, *Little Bo-Peep has Lost Her Jeep*, *I Threw a Kiss in the Ocean*, *Get You Gun and Come Along (We're Fixin' to Kill a Skunk)*. Compiled, with three-page enclosed leaflet, by Samuel Charters.

*ATOMIC CAFE: Radioactive Rock 'N Roll, Blues, Country & Gospel*. Produced by Charles Wolfe and the Archives Project (Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, Pierce Rafferty) (Rounder 1034). Reissue of seventeen selections recorded between 1944 and 1962, with some excerpts from contemporary speeches. Musical selections: *Atom and Evil* (Golden Gate Quartet); *When the Atom Bomb Fell* (Karl and Harty); *Win the War Blues* (Sonny Boy Williamson); *Atomic Power* (Buchanan Brothers); *Jesus Hits Like an Atom Bomb* (Lowell Blanchard with the Valley Trio); *When They Drop the Atomic Bomb* (Jackie Doll and his Pickled Peppers); *Atomic Sermon* (Billy Hughes and the Rhythm Buckaroos); *Old Man Atom* (Sons of the Pioneers); *Uranium* (The Commodores); *50 Megatons* (Sonny Russell); *Atom Bomb Baby* (The Five Stars); *Satellite Baby* (Skip Stanley); *Atomic Cocktail* (Slim Gaillard Quartette); *Atomic Love* (Little Caesar with the Red Callendar Sextette); *Atomic Telephone* (Spirits of Memphis Quartet); *Red's Dream* (Louisiana Red). Enclosed four-page leaflet with notes on songs and artists by Charles Wolfe.

In the emotional fervor of the moment, patriotic or political songs make perfect sense; but in the cooler light of reason and historical perspective they are often trite, simplistic, and naive. These two albums collect topical songs from two different periods of our recent history (and two different musical idioms), but a listener's response to them today may well be the same.

Charters's collection of World War II songs is particularly difficult to listen to. American pop music today has moved so far from the blank orchestral style of the early 1940s that on grounds of musical style alone these selections (with few exceptions) seem trite. It is Charters's thesis in his

notes that these songs represent the end of a popular broadside tradition--"...the quick, easily grasped response to an immediate event expressed in terms of a conventional popular song." In contrast, he claims, the two following wars--the Korean and Vietnamese--"inspired songs...more personal, more directly expressive, closer to poetry than they were to the jingly penny ballad sheets." This thesis is certainly supported by the selections on this album; and in truth I can't think of any WW II songs that represented a thoughtful, individualistic response to the universally supported war--except for the highly political anti-war songs by the Almanac Singers in the months before Hitler's invasion of Russia. But I don't think that the genre ended with World War II by any means. There were plenty of jingoistic or simplistically patriotic songs that came out of the Vietnam conflict--e.g., "Vietnam Guitar" (Red River Dave), "Prayers for Viet Nam" (Easter Brothers), "If Your Dad were a Prisoner of War" (Truehart Kids), "Mopping Up Detail" (Tom McKillen), "All Alone in a Bamboo Cage" (Jack Lindsay), "Who Will Carry the Flag?" (Lindsay), "Battle of Vietnam" (Barton Brothers), and of course "Battle Hymn of Lt. Calley" (Terry Nelson). Nevertheless, Charters is right when he notes that "Despite the emotions of the time it's still a little difficult to deal with lines like, 'We'll have all those Japs right down on their Jap-a-knees,'" or the dreadful cuteness of "Der Fuehrer's Face" (not included in this album). Carson Robison's three compositions on this LP (the two letter songs and "Get Your Gun...") are not much better. The most listenable selection (for me) is the Royal Harmony Quartet's strongly gospel-based rendition of Rank Loesser's "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition"--the first but not the most popular recording of that one-time war favorite.

*Atomic Cafe* spans a longer period of history and is not quite so cohesive in theme. Most of the songs refer to atomic power or atomic bombs (the earliest, "Win the War Blues," was recorded in December 1944, eight months before Hiroshima was leveled), but in many cases it is only in a metaphoric sense. Wolfe observes in his notes that by the 1950s atomic bombs and power became symbolic for sexual prowess or sexual attraction, and on some of the later recordings the sense of awe that is still apparent in such earlier pieces as "Atom and Evil" (1946), or "Atomic Power" (1946) had been completely dissipated and trivialized. Musically, the songs hold up better because they are drawn from vernacular traditions (country, blues, rock 'n' roll) that are still idiomatic today, but textually they span the chasm between the thought-provoking and the trivial. The brief excerpts from speeches by Harry Truman, David Lilienthal, Winston Churchill, and others, are a nice touch to put the material more clearly in historic context. The back jacket states that *Atomic Cafe* is a documentary film from the sound track of which this album is drawn, but no details of the availability of this film are indicated. Neither LP gives full data on the original recordings, but *Atomic Cafe* does give recording dates.

--N.C.



#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

JEMF and AFM record albums will no longer be available through the John Edwards Memorial Foundation. For JEMF LPs order from Arhoolie Records, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, which is taking over the distributorship of our records; all AFM records can be ordered from Music of the Legends, P.O. Box 5459, North Hollywood, CA 91616.

In addition, as the physical assets of the Foundation have been sold to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (see "JEMF Changes Status," page 106), we will no longer be able to fill orders for dubbing, xeroxing, photographs, etc.

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The JEMF has issued two double issues for 1982 in an attempt to keep abreast of its publication schedule. For 1983, we will resume our standard four single issues per year.

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

IN SEARCH OF JERRY LEE LEWIS

By B. Lee Cooper

*WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOIN' ON: JERRY LEE LEWIS*, by Robert Cain (New York: Dial Press, 1981), 143pp, illus., discography; \$9.95, paperback.

*JERRY LEE LEWIS ROCKS!*, by Robert Palmer (New York: Delilah Books, 1981), 128pp, illus.; \$7.95, paperback.

*HELLFIRE: THE JERRY LEE LEWIS STORY*, by Nick Tosches (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1982), 276pp, illus., index; \$6.95, paperback.

*GREAT BALLS OF FIRE: THE UNCENSORED STORY OF JERRY LEE LEWIS*, by Myra Lewis with Murray Silver (New York: Quill Books, 1982), 319pp, illus., index; \$7.50, paperback.

Jerry Lee Lewis is the hottest publication number in popular music today. Four book-length biographies on the Ferriday, Louisiana, rocker have appeared in the past eighteen months. The authors of these studies--Robert Cain, Robert Palmer, Nick Tosches, and Murray Silver--follow a notable line of journalists and critics including Colin Escott, John Grissim, Peter Guralnick, Martin Hawkins, Bob Kinder, and Jim Miller who have attempted to define, characterize, categorize, and accurately pigeonhole the irrepressible Jerry Lee. No study has yet succeeded in achieving this goal. Probably none ever will.

The enigmatic, ambivalent, eccentric nature of Jerry Lee Lewis defies pen-and-paper analysis. His personal drive and stylistic talents are uniformly acknowledged; his egoism, eroticism, and penchant for verbal or physical violence have been amply chronicled; his wizardry with audiences--both large and small--and his onstage pyrotechnics are legendary; and his pre-marital and extra-marital shenanigans and family-related tragedies are also well documented. But what propels this singular human being remains a mystery. One business colleague attempted to resolve this mystery by noting, "Jerry is one of those persons who exists like fixed points on a compass by which everything else must be judged" (Silver, p. 294). Not unlike a magnetic pole, though, Jerry Lee has garnered the attention of nearly every American at one time or another during his blustery 25-year musical career. His private being remains shrouded in ice that appears transparent, but is remarkably hard and cold. Beneath this barrier lurks an unfathomable man.

Robert Cain offers an uncritical, laudatory, generally apologetic picture of Jerry Lee Lewis in *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On*. The pictures in the book are entertaining and the "Discography" (pp. 127-141) is well organized, but the text is sadly spotty and the interviews with Mickey Gilley, Steve Allen, Shelby Singleton, Tom Jones, and Jerry Kennedy are universally shallow. Robert Palmer's study, *Jerry Lee Lewis Rocks!*, moves up a notch in both writing style and critical insight, but it is hopelessly jumbled by mixing the author's own psycho-historical self-interview with Jerry Lee's biography. The photographs, supplied for the most part by Ron and Keith Kellerman, are superb. Despite Palmer's efforts to compile observations by former band members, fan club president Kay Martin, and Sam Phillips into an upbeat, socio-psychological analysis, his effort falls short of success. Under the title "The Devil and Jerry Lee Lewis," Palmer presented a more concise, cogent study of this performer in a five-page 1979 *Rolling Stone* article.

Nick Tosches originally approached the Jerry Lee phenomenon in his fascinating and controversial 1977 study, *Country: The Biggest Music in America* (pp. 57-85). *Hellfire* expands his interpretation with an awesome quality of mystical reporting. This does not mean that facts are ignored or historical chronology is abandoned. Quite the contrary. Tosches functions as a James Michener/William Faulkner in uncovering a diabolical tale of inherited evil. The burdens of highlighting Lewis family rifts and tragedies, depicting the polar elements of religious hymns and the devil's music in Jerry Lee's heart and soul, and of weaving elements of promiscuity, alcoholism, violence, and drug abuse within a single musician's career create a text that sometimes begs for translation. Nevertheless, Tosches is a brilliant writer--even if a trifle excessive in his imagery. The tone of his work is sinister, but he gives Jerry Lee "life" as few other biographers could hope to do.

Murray Silver's *Great Balls of Fire*, penned with the cooperation, advice, memory, and understandable biases of Jerry Lee's third wife, Myra Lewis, is a remarkably thorough, candid study. Although it covers only two-thirds of the rock singer's career (1950-1970), it is elegantly written, thoughtfully organized, and amazingly detailed. Jerry Lee is surrounded by heroes (Judd Phillips and Myra) and villains (Mamie Lewis and Sam Phillips), and marched through numerous personal tragedies of dramatic proportions. The portraits of Jerry Lee's family, friends, business associates, and fans are painted with penetrating strokes. The depth of Silver's biographical work surpass even the stunning rock chronicles written by Jerry Hopkins (*Elvis: A Biography*, 1971; and *Elvis: The Final Years*, 1981). The author uses the details provided by the subject's wife to weave a complex fable that depicts a family's struggle with sudden fame and outrageous fortune, the nature of the American music industry (recording, retailing, and promoting activities), the impact of mass media reporting on personal music during the period from Elvis Presley's rise to prominence until the break-up of the Beatles. Silver has produced an epic tale.

But with all of the literary hoopla about his dynamic stage presence, his personal predilections for revelry and devilment, his troubled fundamentalist soul, and his never-ending search for Elvis's crown as the "King of Rock 'N' Roll," Jerry Lee Lewis remains a masked man throughout these four biographies. Traditional Jerry Lee vignettes are told, but the actor is never stripped of greasepaint to reveal his inner thoughts and feelings. Is Jerry Lee actually a Pentecostal? Is he a Bayou red-neck? Does his unmanageability stem from his own internal stubbornness, or is it a logical reaction to external greed and duplicity? The real Jerry Lee may be as much of a secret from the man from Ferriday as it is from his biographers simply because he has been so determined to be "famous" that he has sublimated all that is soft, warm, personal, and humane in his personality. The outer shell, which effectively wards off the deaths of close relatives, the barbs of nosy reporters, the embarrassments of arrogant fans, the demands of money-hungry supplicants, and even the love of those who genuinely treasure his talents is all that can be depicted. It would be too bad if that was all that was left to this dynamic, perseverant, crowd-pleasing artist.

--Newberry College  
Newberry, South Carolina



## BOOK REVIEWS

*TENEMENT SONGS: THE POPULAR MUSIC OF THE JEWISH IMMIGRANTS*, by Mark Slobin (University of Illinois Press, 1982) 213pp., illustrations, index, footnotes.

In his prologue to *Tenement Songs*, Mark Slobin relates an anecdote concerning Abraham Goldfadden, the father of the Yiddish theater, that succinctly sums up the "revolving door" effect on in-group music forms. It seems that when Goldfadden auditioned actors for his troupe he would have them sing whatever they wanted—and what they wanted to sing ranged from operatic arias, archaic folk songs, to the latest coffeehouse ditty. Unknown to the auditionee composer Arnold Perlmutter was seated in a corner busy transcribing what each hopeful brought forth. When Goldfadden had chosen his troupe and had written his play, he simply plugged in the original audition song that the actor had used, changing only the text to accommodate the action. The effect, as Slobin points out, was to fuse a bond between the actor and his song. What it also did was create a "street-to-stage-to-street" form which put diverse elements into a single recognizable package. The innocent theatergoers were getting a liberal does of a dozen musical forms in which they probably would not have been particularly interested originally.

*Tenement Songs* makes an important statement very early on: Slobin dismantles the concept of the "pure" Yiddish culture that produced the mentality that Yiddish music is the "music of laughter and tears." The innocent hazy image portrayed in "Fiddler on the Roof" has rewritten the true image of the activity, diversity, and eclecticism that went into producing what we can now say is a true Yiddish culture.

Slobin opens his book by putting to rest the "mythic old world" by correctly pointing out that until the Holocaust there was a parallel cultural environment in both the Old and New Worlds. He goes further to present the case for both casual and conscious eclecticism by offering biographies and anecdotes about singers, composers, and players born in the Old World. The range of a varied taste went from simply liking the familiar peasant music to realizing how much learning "mainstream" music would help them get ahead (without converting).

We are offered not only the eclectic influences available to Jews in the Old World, but also the myriad carriers of music in the Jewish world. These are the *khazn* (liturgical singer), the *meshoyrer* (choirboy, apprentice *khazn*), the *klezmer* (instrumentalist), the *badkhn* (improvisatory bard), plus the impresarios, circus managers, wine cellar operators, theater owners—all eager to help fill out the attendance at their events. Once again, this almost random mixing of mediums and influences is only a prelude to the scene to be encountered when the action shifts to the United States.

The era of study is 1880-1924, a time when millions of *Yidn* (Eastern European Jews) came pouring in to the U.S. alongside other out-of-towners all ready to become real "yenkees."

His description of the rise of the Yiddish theater from its simple beginnings to its more elaborate treatment in the 1920s is important. We are again bombarded with the varied cross-influences that the newly-arrived actors and musicians had to contend with—blackface comedy, Irish impressions, vaudeville, ragtime, Victor Herbert; songs about mother, orphaned children, murder songs. It soon became clear that the Yiddish theater was thriving on recognizing those elements in popular culture which could be transmitted to the in-group almost seamlessly. The recognition of these group characteristics, values, and shared history dictated a theater that would take a hand from both Henrik Ibsen or Tony Pastor. It is because this pendulum swings such a wide arc that the labels *pop* and *folk* soon lose their meaning, as the above-mentioned Goldfadden anecdote points out. In fact, it can also be said that the traditional song repertoire is merely a stratified layer of the oldest extant examples of the popular music of the group in question. The Yiddish theater allowed all of these layers to coexist equally.

His descriptions of the creation of both a "high" and "low" culture road is valuable for the examination of the popular concepts of art and entertainment in that era. Western art pretensions

rose in the Jewish world by the successes of musicians/wunderkinder such as Misha Elman and Jasha Heifitz. Every family with a "young scrapper" had a potential "little Elman." The other manifestation was the resetting of traditional songs and tunes "fixed up" (de-Orientalized) with a proper classical tilt. On the "low" road Slobin offers us the rough and tumble Yiddish vaudeville, "a word from our sponsor after-the-play-playlette," which features Yiddish peddlers selling suits to bizarrely-characterized American Indians, German Jews, and Blacks. Popular theater as usual--but in Yiddish. He also picked out a macabre Yiddish-English version of a popular "my gals' appetite" song motif (e.g., "I Had but 15¢," "Bill Morgan and His Gal"). An unusual item. Its inclusion, however, became dulled by the absence of a transliteration to best experience the original Yiddish-English interplay in its formation.

It is with the examination of the contents of the sheet music industry that Slobin begins to zero in on his main points. His approach, the analysis of both cover and contents of the sheets, offers us the benefit of both the conscious and unconscious messages contained within. The composers and publishers were faced with the same situation as the theater producers. To create a medium which is both popular in its awareness of current style and its ability to speak directly to the cultural, historical, and symbolistic identity of the Jewish community. This then would be merely another continuation of the process begun in the Old World.

Slobin briefly touches upon the existence of period collections dedicated to traditional songs and dances. He does mention a medley of wedding dance tunes, but surprisingly neglects to mention the earliest known collection of dance tunes, *Celebrated Hebrew Wedding Dances* (1916), or the later more influential *Kammen International Dance Folio* (1921), which has to this day kept a number of old-time Yiddish dance tunes in the standard club date repertoire.

The examination of the sheet music covers offers us a view of a fledgling industry slowly getting itself on its feet. The illustrations he has chosen and his insights make this bit of iconography a positive step in the study of Yiddish-American history.

It is with the ostensible "meat" of this book--the music--that I had the most difficulty. In choosing what would ordinarily be the best route--an accompanying cassette--Slobin opted for transmitting the music in an "oral tradition" style. However, because of both technical and performance reasons the tape falls short of its potential. It would appear that the tape was considered as an appendage to the book, merely a supplement, rather than having its own intrinsic value. The recordings are erratically recorded (studio recordings, 78 dubs, live concerts--these concerts, unfortunately, were recorded under far from functional circumstances) and unevenly mastered. The sequencing he employs follows the appearance of the item in the book--a good cataloging consideration, but given the varied presence of the recorded items, a difficult thing to listen through on its own (except for the wonderful 78-rpm disc of Charles Cohan singing "Levine and His Flying Machine").

It is with the performances that Slobin makes his own personal musical statements. Throughout this slim volume we have been introduced to singers, composers, and musicians who have combined the several "roads" they have followed to create a pungently Yiddish genre. Slobin, however, takes to the "high" road exclusively and gives us renderings of these many different roads and influences in a high-falutin "lieder" style by soprano Lydia Saxton and pianist Naomi Amos. Slobin has merely continued the earlier trend in Jewish music to present the in-group music through an "Art Music" filter. This stylistically limiting approach creates an imbalance in the balanced conception of the original sound of the music. Though some of the material is well suited to an all art form interpretation, Saxton's trained style is not flexible enough to sing the less "self conscious" materials as easily. Apart from the musical items on the tape, Slobin offers only a few lines of written musical examples in the book; the end result being that the book's usefulness as a tool in the hands of those who would want to put into practice and apply the materials spoken about are at a distinct disadvantage. Without the tape, the book talks about music and presents none. (This is in direct contrast to another current Slobin book *Old Jewish Folk Music: the Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovskii*, University of Pennsylvania Press, which is a treasure trove of outstanding tunes and songs.)

Slobin indicates early on in this book that this is a survey--a brief overview of a subject that demands more intensive study. This is true. Some of the difficulty in compensating for information that falls between the gaps in Slobin's study is that there has not been much similar corresponding peripheral study of other aspects of Yiddish music to rely on (which is why it helps to know a little about the background of this music when you read *Tenement Songs*). It is a clear and insightful analysis of the myriad influences that helped shape and make a distinctive Yiddish music that makes *Tenement Songs* a fine introduction to an underexamined subject, and as Slobin points out, "the fiddler is taken off the roof and put back where he belongs, in the midst of the dancers."

--Henry Sapoznik  
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research  
New York



*RAMBLING BLUES: THE LIFE & SONGS OF CHARLIE POOLE*, by Kinney Rorrer (London: Old Time Music, 1982), 104 pp.; photographs; \$8.95, softcover.

Charlie Poole ranks among the most significant country musicians of the early era. Although not quite in the super-star class with Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family, and Uncle Dave Macon, he does fit into a category only slightly below them in overall esteem, being roughly on a par with Ernest Stoneman; the Skillet Licker figures of Gid Tanner, Riley Puckett, and Clayton McMichen; Fiddlin' John Carson; and Bradley Kincaid. Poole's contributions stem primarily from his leadership of that outstanding string band the North Carolina Ramblers, his pre-bluegrass banjo stylings, and his varied repertoire of material taken from both tradition and older popular material. Author Kinney Rorrer, an historian by profession, established himself as the premier Poole/North Carolina Rambler scholar some fifteen years ago with his booklet *Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers* (Eden, N.C.: Tarheel Printing Company, 1968). This expanded work has been awaited for some time and Poole devotees will not be disappointed.

Rorrer follows Poole's life from beginning to end with considerable detail when one considers that his subject died more than fifty years ago leaving little material behind for future biographers. However, Rorrer has managed to overcome this handicap by painstaking newspaper research and numerous interviews with former Poole associates still living. These include millworkers and local musicians as well as surviving North Carolina Ramblers such as Lonnie Austin and Norman Woodlieff. Particularly significant is his discussion of musical influences on Poole prior to the period of his recordings. The role of milltown music directors in influencing and encouraging early hillbillies--in Poole's case, Otto Kirchies--is one that needs further exploration. He follows Poole's career through his successful early recordings and other professional endeavors. Poole's relationship with fellow North Carolina Ramblers such as Posey Rorer and Roy Harvey is also included as is biographical data on them. Other notable pioneer musicians are discussed to the extent that they crossed paths with Charlie Poole, including Ernest Stoneman and Kelly Harrell.

The effects of the Great Depression hit Poole hard and seemed to hasten his already pronounced tendencies along the path of self-destruction. Like numerous other musical geniuses of the common man extending from Stephen Foster, Buddy Bolden, Scott Joplin, Paul Dresser, Bix Beiderbecke, Bessie Smith, Hank Williams, Scotty Stoneman, and Lefty Frizzell to Elvis Presley, Charlie Poole seemed inclined to borrow from the title of an old Faron Young song to "Live Fast, Love Hard and Die Young." In May 1931, he expired after an extended drinking bout. His music lived on, however, in the minds and hearts of his numerous fans, especially in the Piedmont. Some of his associates managed to remain in music for a time, including his son whose band, the Swingbillies, worked at WPTF Raleigh and recorded for Bluebird. Others, although their styles differed, drew inspiration from Poole. Cecil Campbell, for instance, told me recently that Charlie Poole had been one of his early heroes. Interest in Poole revived in the sixties and enthusiasts reissued most of his recordings on albums designed for the collector's market. Revivalist bands began playing music in the style he had popularized forty to fifty years earlier.

In addition to the fifty pages of text discussing Poole's life and music, the book contains texts of song lyrics recorded by the North Carolina Ramblers along with notations about their origins (illustrations of several sheet music covers are included). The book also contains a good Poole/North Caroline Ramblers discography including groups of that name headed by Harvey and numerous illustrations, many of them from previously unpublished photographs.

Overall, *Rambling Blues* represents a strong effort. Rorrer's research is sound and he writes with considerable understanding of his subject, the era, and Poole's place in the development of country music. The numerous photographs augment the text as does the discography and the song lyrics. By contrast, the weak spots are few and minor. In my opinion, ten chapters in a fifty-page text section seems like too many, although it does provide for the clever device of titling them with phrases from Poole's songs. The discussion concerning yodeler Earl Shirkey, a recording partner of Harvey and member of an N.C. Rambler tour group, is weak considering that Parkersburg, not Moundsville, was his home and apparently overlooks Dave Samuelson's comments in the liner notes to *Charlie Poole & the Highlanders* (Arbor 201), which states that Shirkey worked on the B. and O. Railroad in Parkersburg until his death in 1951. Rorrer's doubts about Shirkey's Swiss education, however, seem quite plausible.

A final comment is not so much a fault of Rorrer's as it is a general remark concerning data on record sales which has found its way into several recent bits of hillbilly research. Rorrer points out that Poole's earliest releases sold best, that thereafter sales of later releases tapered off somewhat, and that once the Depression hit, nearly all records exhibited poor sales. Two questions put quite simply are: (1) Is there not something of a correlation between a record's sales and the length of time it was on the market in prosperous economic times? In other words, perhaps a record released in 1927 had the possibility of being available for a year longer than one released in 1928 and this may have accounted for the earlier release selling more. (2) As increasing numbers of Poole records became available, a buyer with limited income had to be more selective in his purchases.

Obviously sales figures reflect a record's appeal to some extent, but other factors also exist. These remarks notwithstanding, Kinney Rorrer's *Rambling Blues* is a fine biography of Charlie Poole and also a fine piece of research about old-time music. It is strongly recommended for anyone interested in the history of country music generally and especially for those persons who help select members for the Country Music Hall of Fame, but whose memories cannot go back before 1950.

--Ivan M. Tribe  
Rio Grande College  
Rio Grande, Ohio



*ADIRONDACK VOICES: WOODSMEN AND WOODS LORE*, by Robert D. Bethke (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1981), xii + 148 pp., preface, notes, index; \$12.50, hardcover.

*Stories are things if you don't tell them right along, you forget 'em. Only time I'll tell one now is if somebody tells one. Then it will kind of remind me of one similar to it...*

*In the woods there some pretty good singers. Years ago you sang a lot. If you were in bars, you sang. Today you don't. It's a different class of people.*

With these words of Eddie Ashlaw of Parishville, New York, Robert Bethke begins his important book on the oral and musical traditions of the men of the lumberwoods of the Adirondack Mountains, past and present. Ashlaw's words imply both the objectives of the book and the ways in which it was researched and written.

Bethke undertook field research in the northern Adirondacks where little collecting had been done before, and none of that systematic. Over several years he was able to ascertain a considerable storytelling and singing tradition among the men of the woods. While his book explains several generalizations about the region and about oral traditions in this occupational group, it is especially memorable for the "case studies" of selected older men who had spent nearly all their lives at lumbering in the woods and who were most articulate in telling about it, often in "big stories" and "old songs."

The first half of the book is devoted to storytelling--mostly of the personal narrative, tall tale, or local hero legend varieties. The fortunate part of Bethke's (and other professional folklorists's) work is that he insists on using the verbatim texts of his sources and then providing adequate information about the context and texture of their telling. The actual words of the men who still tell the stories are far more appealing than any literary retelling could be.

Using Hamilton "Ham" Ferry--retired logger and still a tavern keeper--as his primary source and subject, Bethke discusses the importance of memory, the importance of setting, and the importance of audience to the tradition of storytelling. He examines the role of performance and suggests that Ferry is as accomplished in traditional style and technique in his barroom "theater" as good actors are on the legitimate stage. As entertaining as the medium is, the performer is serious about his art and conscious of his audience. Tales of deer and bear hunts, giant fish, Big Bertha (a giant fish-worm), achievements, and accidents in the lumber camps are all told with equal enthusiasm. So, too, are stories of ubiquitous black flies, mosquitos, bedbugs, and lice.

While stories of the woodsmen are becoming rare, Bethke suggests that even further receded in the collective memory of the Adirondack woodsmen are the old songs. Bunkhouses and selected barrooms and homes were, in the past, the scenes of frequent gatherings of men, off for a time from work, and eager for entertainment. In certain places, like the Waverly Hotel in St. Regis Falls or the Grand Union Hotel at Tupper Lake Junction, "a bunch would come that were all good singers." That was before the days of commercial jukeboxes or radios. It was not uncommon to find among these men Eddie Ashlaw or his younger brother Ted.

The second half of the book is devoted to the woods-singing traditions of the foothills and to these two outstanding singers. There is a considerable discussion of the passing down of the traditional lyrics and "airs" or tunes from one generation to another and usually some recollections of how, when, and from whom each example was learned. Certain men, like Johnny Pelow of Hopkinton, are often credited by the men as sources and teachers of "old songs." On other occasions they failed to remember, if they ever knew, that numerous examples in their repertoires had been in common circulation from early recordings, sheet music, or radio broadcasts.

The chapters on music are like an encyclopedia of songs that range from the English ballad "Barbara Allen" to Ernest Tubbs's "I Know What it Means to be Lonely." Ted Ashlaw, alone, remembered sixty-eight ballads and songs; he may have once known several hundred. The book contains the lyrics

(as recorded from the men by Bethke) and careful musical transcriptions by Norman Cazden for twenty-five examples taken from several oral sources. There are songs that have appeared in other collections of lumbercamp music in other parts of North America, like "Lumberman's Alphabet," "Utah Carl," and "Willie Was as Fine a Sailor." And there are local renditions of much-traveled songs, like "The Jam on Gerry's Rock," and "The Colton Boy," adapted to the Irish-American ballad "The Boston Burglar." "Miner Hill," a migratory tune commonly used to accompany lyrics that ridiculed (jokingly) all the members of a logging crew, was composed by Ted Ashlaw. The changing role of singers, the changes in songs, and the effects of a hard life on the aesthetics and the performance of these singers are discussed.

The book is a valuable addition to the growing collection of carefully researched and well-written materials about the oral traditions of American regions and American folk groups. It is rich in examples, accurate in details and observations, and thorough in documentation. Extensive bibliographic notes at the ends of all the chapters are very helpful. *Adirondack Voices* is also a very sympathetic account about the hardships in the lives of these woodsmen, without being romantic or nostalgic for an era that never will return. Change is an expected and accepted aspect in the nature of traditional life. This book accounts for changes in the storytelling and woods-singing traditions of the Adirondacks and places them in proper perspective.

Readers may also be interested to know that Robert Bethke produced an album of songs entitled *Ted Ashlaw: Adirondack Woodsinger* in 1976 for Philo Records, from field recordings he had done in preparation for this book. Among the examples included are "Miner Hill," "The Roving Cunningham," "Mickey Brannigan's Pup," "Katie Morey," and "The Mantle So Green"; there are twelve others in the album, number 1022 in Philo's catalog.

--Varick A. Chittenden  
State University of New York  
Canton, New York



*SCANDALIZE MY NAME: BLACK IMAGERY IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC*, by Sam Dennison (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 594pp.; \$60.00.

Several writers have published accounts of Afro-American stereotypes in the popular songs of certain eras but, until now, no one has undertaken the study of black imagery found throughout the entire history of American popular music. That is the task Sam Dennison sets for himself in *Scandalize My Name: Black Imagery in American Popular Music*. Obviously, such a project cannot be adequately handled in a short period of time and the author spent sixteen years putting this study together. This enormous labor investment was well worth it, for Dennison has written an important and worthwhile book--one that is certain to be a valuable scholarly resource for some time to come.

*Scandalize My Name* is based on the thesis that virtually all of the American songs about the black are, in some way, demeaning to the black image. These songs, in turn, both represented and shaped popular attitudes toward negroes. Through an intensive examination of hundreds of songs ranging from 1684-1971 this thesis is persuasively demonstrated in the book's ten chapters. Among Dennison's original contributions are pointing out the falsity of several fictions generally accepted by other writers on popular music. Some of these include the beliefs that "Jim Crow," the Thomas Dartmouth Rice hit of the 1820s, was based on an actual incident, was derived from black folk music, was sympathetic to the negro, and insured the future of black song by its success. Basing his argument on convincing logic and evidence, Dennison points out that the "call and response" pattern generally cited in support of the number's African background is also found in many other types of music closer to Western experience.

Praising an important book like this is, of course, easy and could continue almost indefinitely but the volume also has some negative aspects that merit mention. These are mostly minor and are cited here not necessarily in the order of their importance. Some factual errors are scattered throughout the volume. Phil Harris is, to my knowledge, not dead as Dennison states, and "Welfare Cadillac" was not written by Merle Haggard as is implied here. Joe Arzonia, not Joe Arizona, was the pseudonym used by the writer of "Preacher and the Bear" and the famous collector of Ozark folklore was Vance Randolph, not Randolph Vance. Both the Randolph and Arzonia errors may be merely typos but the same cannot be said for the remarks about "Turkey in the Straw." It is not known as "There Was an Old Soldier Who had a Wooden Leg" and it did have words before Otto Bonnell's arrangement was published in 1899. Finally, despite Dennison's claim to the contrary, a number of people during the nineteenth century questioned the claims that the songs of blackface minstrels were authentic black songs, the most memorable such criticism being by a Y.S. Nathanson in *Putnam's Monthly* in 1855.

Perhaps because he feels a need to emphasize his main thesis, Dennison confuses effects with motives. He argues that "destruction...of the black male's ego appeared to be a primary goal of the coon song" (p. 363). Certainly many texts give this impression but proving that such a goal lay behind their creation is difficult and not accomplished here. It seems more logical to assume that the songwriters were more concerned with making money than promoting bigotry and that the texts appeared in such volume merely because they sold. In any event, revealing motives is impossible without some consideration of the lives of individual songwriters. There is also a tendency to criticize composers rather than lyricists. Stephen Foster, Thomas Paine Westendorf, and David W. Guion are singled out for criticism but in these particular cases they supplied the music, not the words. Obviously these men found nothing greatly objectionable about the efforts of their collaborators but blame should be placed where due.

There are two further criticisms of some importance that must be registered. One is Dennison's failure to acknowledge those who earlier worked on the same topic. At least a half-dozen articles and dissertations dealing with stereotypes of blacks in popular songs have appeared during the past twenty-five years but none of these are cited by Dennison. Surely he was aware of these studies but, if not, then his sixteen years of research was hardly as thorough as it might seem. Even more significant is the author's misunderstanding of the nature of folk music. For him it is a limited form restricted to a small geographic area. This concept of folk music leads him to make faulty assumptions concerning the distinction between folk, popular, and "serious" (isn't all music serious?) music. These errors lead in turn to erroneous or doubtful conclusions regarding the function of nonsense verses, the nature of folk songs, and about the relationship between popular and folk song and the lasting power of the latter.

Quite a number of misspellings occur throughout the book but that is probably to be expected in a study as lengthy as this. Neither these, nor the other flaws, greatly devalue this mammoth work which is truly a landmark piece of scholarship.

--W. K. McNeil  
Ozark Folk Center  
Mountain View, Arkansas



*WHITE BOY SINGIN' THE BLUES: THE BLACK ROOTS OF WHITE ROCK*, by Michael Bane (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 269 pp.; \$5.95.

Several books and essays published during the past decade have chastized white recording artists for "stealing" tunes from black performers and then building successful pop music careers on the shoulders of unacknowledged Afro-American singers and composers. Michael Bane offers a thoughtful corrective interpretation to this half-truth portrayal about the nature of the contemporary music industry. His arguments are honest, earthy, and cogent. He examines such complex elements as interaction, synthesis, cooperation, and reaction in areas of human relations and economic enterprise. *White Boy Singin' the Blues* is undeniably a paean to black musical creativity. It is also a first-rate elaboration of mutual misunderstandings and exchanges between the black and white cultures in America. But most of all this book tells the story of how the blues and country music became rock--the sound of our time.

Michael Bane has compiled a lengthy list of literary credits. His articles have been published in the *Charlotte Observer*, *The Village Voice*, and *Rolling Stone*; he has served as editor and contributing columnist for *Country Music* magazine; and he has produced two book-length popular music studies: *The Outlaws* (1978) and *Who's Who in Rock* (1981). From the historical perspective established in this study, though, the most important qualification that Bane possesses for examining the evolutionary and geographical development of contemporary music is his Memphis birthplace. As the author himself asserts, "We'll be spending a lot of time in Memphis, because it is the single most important city in the history of American popular music, the home of the Blues and Beale Street, the home of Elvis Presley and Sun Records, the home of Stax Records and some of the finest soul music of the 1960s. One would be hardpressed," concludes Memphian Bane, "to find some area of popular music that wasn't touched by that city--its influence can be felt in today's discos and country honky-tonks" (pp. 17-18).

The majority of Bane's analysis is delivered in a chronological format. He begins with the African heritage of Mississippi Delta Tunes, moves to the growth of gospel songs within the context of Bible Belt evangelism, explores the birth of Beale Street Blues and black dance, traces the rhythmic interchanges between hillbilly/country and western singers and early blues musicians, studies the emergence of Sun Records and Sam Phillips--and of Elvis Presley and Charlie Rich singin' "nigger stuff"

to white audiences, acknowledges the powerful pulse of the Motown era, comments on the impact of Limey rockers (The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Joe Cocker, and Eric Clapton) and the electronic white boys (Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield) who spotlighted the talents of B. B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, and the Powerhouse Bluesmen of Chicago; speaks about the ill-fated Icons of the late 1960s (Otis Redding, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix); praises Phil Walden and the explosion of Southern Rock; and concludes with a 1970s survey of Isaac Hayes, disco, and the urban cowboy reaction. This oversimplified topical recitation is somewhat unfair to Bane. His well-organized text flows with feeling, energy, and insight. The power of his concise statements and strongly-cast images make his book a smooth-reading, distinctive contribution to the literature of rock.

The genuinely eerie aspect about Bane's study is his ability to conjure from a Southerner's perspective the mystery, fear, danger, and suspicion that continues to shroud race relations in the United States. "Rock and roll," observes the author, "was initially more than a white man singing the blues--it was a spark that arced between the two cultures, black and white" (p. 159). Popular music has constantly drawn its authority and dynamic power of renewal from this electric fusion. One of the more fascinating assertions that Bane makes is that *there is no such thing as black music*. His conception of all post-1950 American popular music--supplementing and broadening the positions presented by Lawrence Redd, Charlie Gillett, and Peter Guralnick--is that the "Top 40" steamroller is fueled by black energy while still functioning in a predominantly white economy.

There are several questions which Bane either fails to ask or neglects to answer fully in this slim volume. Why are the Righteous Brothers ignored as prototypical 1960s white boys singin' the blues? Is white blues stylist John Hammond (who is not even mentioned in the text) a transitional white boy singin' the blues, a preserver or conserver of the authentic blues heritage, a commercially unsuccessful honky, or simply an insignificant 1960s folk-singer gone blues crazy? How do Johnny Otis (pp. 137-138) and George Thorogood (omitted) fit into Bane's Memphis-connection thesis? Are Chicago, New York City, New Orleans, Detroit, Los Angeles, and other black population centers consistently second to Memphis during the past three decades in both creative energy and historic relevance to fostering the nationwide rock phenomenon? What should be made of rock's newest generation--from Britain's heavy metal thumpers to America's jazz fusion specialists--as inheritors of the Memphis gospel/blues/R & B seed? Bane touches ever-so-briefly on some of these issues, but his study would have been much stronger if he had devoted more time to carefully exploring them. For academic readers, the total lack of internal citations and the failure to provide either a bibliography or a discography will also tend to create credibility problems.

Michael Bane has produced a readable, informative, and somewhat disturbing study. His verbal playfulness and lack of footnotes may unintentionally fool some scholars and frustrate others--but this book matches the very best analyses of rock music yet written. *White Boy Singin' the Blues* should be required reading for all students of American popular music and contemporary race relations.

--B. Lee Cooper  
Newberry College  
Newberry, South Carolina



*BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BLACK MUSIC: VOL. 2: AFRO-AMERICAN IDIOMS*, by Dominique-Rene de Lerma (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). xv + 220 pp., 8.5 x 11"; \$29.95.

*BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BLACK MUSIC: VOL. 3: GEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES*, by Dominique-Rene de Lerma (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982). xiv + 284 pp., 8.5 x 11"; \$35.00.

These two volumes continue Greenwood Press's series, *Encyclopedia of Black Music*, the first volume of which was reviewed in *JEMFQ* 61. The format is the same as in that earlier volume. Vol. 2 is divided into: General histories; minstrelsy; spirituals and earlier folk music; ragtime; musical theater; concert music; band music; blues; gospel music; rhythm and blues and other popular music; and jazz. The one problem with this volume is an occasional tendency to include titles that deal with music in a general way, and only slightly, if at all, with black music. In the section on general histories, for example, is Henry Pleasants's *The Great American Popular Singers*. But if this book, which is a collection of essays on important pop singers, white and black, is to be included, then why not every other general history of American pop music by Spaeth, Ewen, etc.? In the section of minstrelsy the problem is more acute. Some references--e.g., Edmonstone's *The Story of Minstrelsy* and Gammond's *Best Music Hall and Variety Songs* refer not at all to American, but to British (white) minstrelsy or stage. And the listing of 400 nineteenth-century songsters, which comprises part of the

Minstrelsy section, includes many that have little to do with black or blackface tradition, such as the three Hutchinson Family songsters. However, I must admit that to err by being too inclusive is preferable to being too selective; the student or scholar user will be able to weed out those citations that do not suit his purposes easily enough.

Volume 3 is divided into Africa, The Caribbean, The Southern Americas, and the Northern Americas. The latter section is subdivided into thirty states and the District of Columbia. Again, in some instances I would fault the collection mainly for over-inclusiveness. Why include Francis J. Child's *War Songs for Freedmen*, which has little if any black relevance? Similarly with Mellinger E. Henry's JAF article, "More Songs from the Southern Highlands"?--but if it is to be included, then why not also include the companion articles, "Songs from the Southern Highlands" and "Still More Songs...?"

A smaller quibble is with the practice of frequently listing more than one printing of a single book (hardback and paperback; or American and English printing) without any cross-references or mention of relationship. This, as well as the other drawbacks, seem to be a result of many listings being taken from other bibliographic citations without the item cited itself having been examined. All of which is not to deny that these references will be extremely useful to future researchers, and Greenwood is to be thanked for publishing what will doubtless be a series that finds its way almost exclusively into libraries and not private collections.

--Norm Cohen



*SWEET SONGS FOR GENTLE AMERICANS: The Parlor Song in America, 1790-1860*, by Nicholas E. Tawa (Bowling Green, Ohio: The Popular Press, 1980); 273 pp., index, bibliography, musical examples, song listing. \$10.95, papercovers; \$21.95, clothbound.

Most readers with a serious interest in American folk or early country music have a general idea of the popular music of the nation in the decades after the Civil War. It was not until then--both because the easing of the pressures of frontier life allowed more time to be given to leisure entertainment and because the advances in industrialization made wider-spread dissemination a possibility--that music became a thriving factor in American urban life. And from the years between 1870 and 1920 hundreds of compositions were published that found their way into the repertoires of traditional singers, later to be collected in the field by amateur and professional folklorists, and also to be recorded in the studio by the record industry in the first decade or two of the hillbilly music business. Furthermore, there have been numerous historical studies published by Spaeth, Ewen, Gilbert, Marks, and others; numerous inexpensive reprints of sheet music and sheet music covers from the period, and, at least for the songs of the 1890s and later, a large number of commercial phonograph recordings with the more popular songs of the era.

On the other hand, the preceding half-century is a murkier era, musically speaking. Much less has been written of that era, and far fewer recordings of music of ante-bellum decades are available. The songs themselves tend to be lyrical rather than balladic in the folkloristic sense (i.e., non-narrative), and consequently harder to categorize, and also relate less closely to traditional folk music as it has been recovered since the turn of the century.

Tawa's book is an interesting and remarkably informative study that should do much to dispel the aura of prehistory attached to the popular music of the first half of the nineteenth century. As Tawa explains in his opening chapter, parlor songs were works written for, and widely consumed by, a growing urban middle class that wanted simple songs that could be played and sung by themselves--i.e., by people of modest musical training. Such music was disseminated in sheet music and found its way into the large number of homes with pianos, small organs, or other musical instruments. And fortunately for us today, numerous purchasers of the music would bind collections of sheets together in volumes, which have survived to the present. This study is based largely on the author's examination of over 500 privately-bound collections now at the Houghton Library of Harvard University and the Brown Collection of the Boston Public Library.

For convenience, Tawa divides his time frame into three historical periods. The first, 1780-1810, was characterized by the fact that almost all the music of the period was written in and imported from Britain, and many of the popular singers came from there as well. The second, 1811-41, saw the slow rise of American singers and composers and also publishers. The third period, 1841-61, was dominated by native music.

Chapter Two, "The Parlor-Song Public," discusses the American musical public of the period, citing accounts of amateur singing, both public and private--an activity that took place in such profusion

that it was often remarked upon by foreign visitors to these shores. Chapter Three, "The Parlor Song in Music Education," surveys public and private instruction, singing classes, manuals and journals, and musical conventions. One important development that came at the end of the 1840s was the abandonment by educators of the viewpoint that musical training was only for the children of the affluent families; that all young citizens could benefit from musical education. Chapter Four, "Ballad Singers and their Performances," discusses in turn the British and the American singers and their repertoires, styles, and impact on audiences. It should be noted that ballad in this period was used to mean any simple strophic song, easy to perform, generally with keyboard (or perhaps guitar) accompaniment, and much more often lyrical than narrative.

In the fifth chapter, "Minstrel Songs and Parlor Melodies," Tawa discusses the music of the minstrel stage, which in general was not what was sung in private homes by amateur singers. However, minstrel music did exert an influence on parlor music, and some of the more admired melodies were co-opted into service for more genteel songs or versions that were cleansed of the rough, raucus tone of the minstrel stage and of its permeating pseudo-negro accents and dialect. The title of the next chapter, "The Economics of the Parlor Song," is self-explanatory, dealing with costs, marketing devices, profits, quantities, etc.

Chapter Seven is "The Subject Matter of Parlor Songs." The most popular subject is one of love or affections, and Tawa divides this heading into several distinct sub-categories: leave-taking, or lovers parting; lovers long parted and expecting to reunite; lovers long parted with no hope of reunion; elegies over dead lovers; rejected love; idylls of praise of beloved ones; serenades; light-hearted love songs; songs of devotion to family or friends; and remembrances of dear possessions of loved ones departed. Other subjects were mortality and the passage of time; lamentations and death; estrangement from loved ones; prisoners suffering without hope of release; young brides facing an uncertain future; sacred songs; pastoral songs; and homiletic songs. Tawa notes that these subjects did not vary in popularity over the period of his study. One chronological change he does note is that narrative songs were concentrated mostly in the first period, and then they dealt usually with national or patriotic themes.

The last and longest chapter is "Musical Characteristics of Parlor Songs" and provides the musical parallel to the contents of the preceding chapter, discussing the types of melodies, phrasing, chordal structure, etc. The overriding consideration in the composers's minds was to make the pieces easily singable; hence the range of pitch was generally narrow, dynamics were absent, there was little if any chromaticism, and tonal clarity was never forsaken. There were some important complex parlor songs; these date mostly from after 1840 and generally they were introduced to the American public by European-trained singers.

The volume concludes with an appendix that lists, alphabetically, the most popular 170 songs in the collections that the author examined; a selective bibliography; an appendix of 38 brief musical examples; a supplement of 16 representative parlor songs, the sheet music of which (without covers) is printed in its entirety; and a five-page index.

The book, all in all, is informative, well-written, and free of typographical errors; I recommend it highly.

--N.C.



*SEA SONGS AND BALLADS FROM NINETEENTH CENTURY NOVA SCOTIA: The William H. Smith and Fenwick Hatt Manuscripts.* Edited by Edith Fowke (New York: Folklorica Press, 1981). 118 pp., intro., notes, bibliography, record list, index; paperback, \$15.95.

*FOLK SONGS OF THE CATSKILLS.* Edited and annotated, with a study of tune formation and relationships by Norman Cazden, Herbert Haufrechts, and Norman Studer. Foreword by Pete Seeger (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982). xv + 650 pp; cloth, \$60.50; paper, \$19.95.

*NOTES TO FOLK SONGS OF THE CATSKILLS* by Norman Cazden, Herbert Haufrechts, and Norman Studer. Companion volume to *Folk Songs of the Catskills*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982). 188 pp.; cloth, \$39.50.

It has been a good year for those interested in published folksong collections; elsewhere in this issue I have reviewed four recently published reprints of folksongs from Folklorica Press. These two volumes (and the companion notes to one of them) are all the more interesting inasmuch as they are collections that have not previously been in print. Both are unusual collections, though in quite different ways.

The volume edited by Fowke contains two previously unpublished manuscript collections: "Chanties and Other Songs of the Sea," recalled by William H. Smith of Liverpool, N.S., contains thirty-four items, mostly chanties, that Smith heard in the 1870s through the 1890s and were dictated to his son in 1940. The second manuscript contains twenty-one songs, all but one of which are ballads, written down by several different sailors in a notebook kept by Capt. Hatt between 1875 and 1883. This may be the earliest written collection of Anglo-Canadian folksongs known. Fowke became aware of these two collections through Canadian novelist Thomas H. Raddall, whose use of folksongs was so effective in his short story "Blind MacNair," that she wrote him to inquire about his experiences with traditional singers. Raddall, it turned out, had been interested in sea songs from his youth, and learned many from sailors on occasions when he went to sea in small steamships out of Halifax and Sydney, N.S. Through such contacts he learned about William H. Smith and persuaded Smith's son to record his father's memoirs with the typewriter. From conversations with Smith and others, Raddall learned about singing contests that used to be held between chanteymen. He chanced to meet George Hatt, who told him that his father had kept a notebook with songs written down by the participants in one such contest. Hatt allowed Raddall to make a typewritten copy of the notebook. By 1975 when Fowke contacted Raddall, both collections had been given to Dalhousie University, and she was able to obtain photocopies of both. This volume includes the songs in both collections together with Fowke's very helpful notes and commentary, references, and title and first line index.

Smith's collection, as noted, contains about two-thirds chanties and the remainder ballads. Many of the songs are fragmentary; most include a sentence or two by Smith on where and when he learned the song, whether it was widespread, etc. A handful of the selections have not, to the best of Fowke's knowledge, been reported elsewhere. Hatt's collection consists mostly of tragic ballads. Twelve of the ballads are of British origin (six are listed in Laws's *American Ballads from British Broadsides*) and eight of North American (four listed in Laws's *Native American Balladry*). Not surprisingly, the repertoires of both collections are thoroughly Northeast American and Canadian; very few of the songs are known in the American Southeast tradition--the single outstanding exception being the nearly ubiquitous "Young Charlotte," a fine version of which appears in Hatt's manuscript.

The 178 songs in the Catskills volume were taken down from traditional singers through the programs of Camp Woodland, a summer camp in the Catskills for both adults and children whose directors (the three authors) sought out traditional lore in that region. The collecting began in 1941 and continued to 1962, though most of the collection had been assembled before 1959, when a tape recorder became available. The collecting itself was sponsored and supported by Camp Woodland, Inc., and several grants from different agencies supported the preparation of the final typescript. The last stages of its completion fell on the shoulders of Haufrecht, inasmuch as Studer died in 1978 and Cazden in 1980.

The volume is organized into sixteen song chapters following a song introduction on the origins of the book, on the Catskills and its denizens, and on musical matters. The chapters are: (1) lumbering and rafting; (2) war and battle; (3) true love; (4) courting too slow; (5) love meets obstacles; (6) tragedies; (7) legends; (8) religious songs; (9) pioneer days; (10) working and hard times; (11) shabby genteel songs; (12) outlaws and ruffians; (13) scrapes and escapades; (14) merry ditties; (15) non-sense songs; and (16) the Catskill scene.

This organization conceals the common divisions between British vs. native ballads; between traditional Child ballads vs. broadside pieces. Such information can readily be assembled from information in the Table of Contents. Fifteen songs are identified as Child ballads or near relatives thereof; forty-six are keyed to ballads in Laws's *American Ballads from British Broadsides*; and ten to his *Native American Balladry*. Unlike most collections I have seen from southeastern states, the songs from the pop music domain date from the 1880s and earlier, rather than from the period of 1880-1920. Whether this represents a bias of the collectors or a real regional difference in the folksong repertoire as it existed in the 1940s I do not know but certainly am curious about.

The folk musicological scholarship represented by the headnotes to these songs is, frankly, overwhelming--especially in view of the fact that the core of the references to other versions and variants has been set aside for the companion volume. I haven't the least intention to demonstrate the Reviewer's Superiority by citing the obligatory handful of references that the editors somehow overlooked (assuming that there are that many). The only recurring shortcoming is the frequent neglect of recorded references--which by now should not have to play ugly stepsister to the medium of print. This has the doubly unfortunate effect of also resulting in occasional omissions to significant editorial commentary in record brochures or articles that deal specifically with recorded aspects of folksong. In the case of "The Prisoner's Song" (#100), their overlooking of the version in JEMF 103: *Paramount Old Time Tunes* and of my extensive discussion in the brochure to that LP costs them little, since their own historical summary is just as good as--if not better than--my own; though awareness of that source may have prevented them from referring to Walter Haden's discussion in *JEMFQ* as by Bruce Haden, and from transferring Malone and McCulloch from editorial to authorial roles in *Stars of Country Music*. (I am surprised, though, by the editors following the lead of other writers in identifying the tune of "The Prisoner's Song" with that of "The Ship that Never Returned," a claim of con-

sanguinity that leaves me cold.) On the other hand, failure to cite Archie Green's article in *Caravan* on "Will the Weaver's Hillbilly Kinfolk" in their discussion to song #140 does result in the omission of an important dimension to that broadside ballad. What is particularly groundbreaking in the annotations to this collection is that the editors have given equal attention to the matter of tunes related to the item under examination and not devoted themselves solely to the textual relationships.

It should be noted that the separate volume of Notes and Sources is no more than that; the full discussions of the songs's histories are given in the primary volume. The supplementary volume lists previously available sources of the particular version given; of other variants by the same performer; of adaptations of versions by that performer; of other published commentaries or references; broadside and songster versions; related texts and tunes; and other versions of the tune used for the given text. Occasionally there are listings of items with similar titles that are not related (e.g., in the case of "Rock Island Line"). The 123 pages of these notes is followed by an impressive bibliography that includes over 2,400 items.

The price of the hardcover version of *Folk Songs of the Catskills* is not out of the range of similarly ponderous publications these days; and a mere \$20 for the paperback version is a bargain indeed. I am curious, though, about the economics that led to the pricing of the supplementary volume, slightly more than one-fourth the length of the main volume, at two-thirds the price. In any case, I heartily recommend one or both volumes to anyone seriously interested in folksong scholarship; it will be a long time, I expect, before another publication with so much commendable original folksong research comes to the fore.

--N.C.



*FOLKSONGS OF FLORIDA*, collected and edited by Alton C. Morris; musical transcriptions by Leonard Deutsch; new introduction by Robert S. Thompson (Folklorica, Inc., 301 East 47th St., New York, NY 10017). xxii + 464pp., introduction, bibliography, index. \$16.95, paperback.

*BALLADS AND SONGS OF INDIANA*, collected and edited by Paul G. Brewster. New foreword by W. Edson Richmond (New York & Philadelphia: Folklorica, 1981). xvi + 376 pp., introduction, bibliography, index. \$15.95, paperback.

*FOLKSONGS OF MISSISSIPPI AND THEIR BACKGROUND*, collected and edited by Arthur Palmer Hudson; foreword by George W. Boswell (New York & Philadelphia: Folklorica, 1981). xii + 321 pp., introduction, bibliography, index. \$15.95, paperback.

*ANOTHER SHEAF OF WHITE SPIRITUALS*, collected, edited, and illustrated by George Pullen Jackson, new preface by Don Yoder (New York & Philadelphia: Folklorica, 1981). xviii + 233 pp., introduction, bibliography, indices. \$15.95, paperback.

These four folksong collection reprints, originally published in 1950, 1940, 1936, and 1952, respectively, have all long been out of print. They are among the recent publications of a new folklore publishing house which is operating under the editorial guidance of Kenneth S. Goldstein. Each volume is reproduced in complete facsimile from the original edition, with only a new introduction commenting variously on the importance of the collection and/or of the collector.

Brewster's Indiana collection was made in the 1930s in the southwestern part of the state. It contains 261 variants of 100 different songs, with music for 36 of the variants. Hudson's Mississippi collection was made by the author in the late 1920s and would have been published in 1930 but for the economic hardships of the Depression. It contains 207 variants of 157 songs, all collected from white singers, with no musical transcriptions. The absence of any music was not by the author's design: the material readied for publication in 1930 contained 27 tunes, but these were omitted in 1936 for reasons of economy. Morris's Florida collection is the largest of the batch, including 306 variants of 243 different folksongs with music for 170 of the variants. Jackson's collection, his last major work on American religious folksongs, contains texts and music for 363 white spirituals, some taken from oral sources, many from early printed collections.

Apart from such mundane matters as size and region, the collections differ in more important ways. To me, Brewster's collection is the least interesting of the four, primarily because of its conservatism. Of the 100 songs, only 1 cannot be identified by the author with an earlier source, and only 3 had not been collected previously in America or Britain. With few exceptions--most noteworthy being the two Indiana ballads, "Pearl Bryan" and "Fuller and Warren," the headnotes are confined to listing other collected versions and occasional notes on the singers and what they have to say about the songs. Hudson's collection is more adventurous, with about two dozen songs that had

not been collected previously. Morris's collection, though, is the most eclectic, including some 40 songs never previously collected, many of which Morris recognized as being of very recent composition ("Lee Bible," "Miami Hairikin," and "West Palm Beach Storm" all concerned events of 1928 and 1929). I was, therefore, interested to learn from Robert S. Thompson's new introduction that Morris's collecting efforts were broader still, having included 26 foreign-language songs (in Spanish, Greek, Slovak, and Polish). Thompson's remarks also point out that Morris's magnum opus was blighted with the same curse that struck at Vance Randolph's magnificent collection *Ozark Folksongs*: it was threatened with a lawsuit by a song publisher who claimed that it infringed on a song copyright. The song, in Morris's case, was "Casey Jones," still under copyright by Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. It was the same publisher that attacked *Ozark Folksongs* for the inclusion of "Wreck of the Old 97" and "Prisoner's Song."

The most important of the four volumes, though, must be Jackson's collection. A veritable mountain of scholarship, every song is graced with commentary that represents the fruits of a lifetime of scholarly devotion to the field of religious folksong. If Jackson's work is today less generally recognized than that of Brewster, Morris, or Hudson, it is only because there has been so much less interest in religious than secular folksong. Unlike the other three collections, Jackson's interest is as much in the tunes as in the texts, and he treats both aspects of the songs--and also the singing styles as well--to his scrutinizing analysis.

By today's standards, the four volumes are not unusually expensive; and all are graced with handsomely designed covers. They should be welcomed by everyone seriously interested in American folksong studies.

--Norm Cohen



*WEST VIRGINIA FOLK MUSIC: A Descriptive Guide to Field Recordings in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection*, edited by John A. Cuthbert (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press: 1982). xvi + 185 pp., photos, papercovers; \$10.00.

Students of American folksong have a large number of volumes of published song collections to which to turn to aid them in their studies. In many regional areas, however, there are larger song collections unpublished in archives than appear in published volumes: the Mary C. Parler Randolph and Max Hunter collections in the Ozarks, the Western Kentucky Folklore Archives at UCLA, the Archive of California and Western Lore also at UCLA, and the collection of the Virginia Folklore Society come readily to mind. This descriptive index provides a guide to another impressive collection of approximately 4,000 sound recordings collected between 1937 and 1972 by several collectors, including Louis W. Chappell, Cortez D. Reece, Kenneth Carvell, and others. The listing is organized by archive/collection, and chronologically within the collection. Each collection is introduced by a description that includes place and date of recording, nature of material, evaluation of the technical quality of the recordings, comments whether transcriptions, notes, etc., are available, and the location within the archive. Each item entry includes the (performer's) title, a list of pertinent key topics, a bibliographic reference, a description of the verse structure, a key to the medium (solo voice, fiddle, etc.), and the disc/tape location within the archive. There are thirty key topics, such as bawdy songs, drinking and drunkards, instrumental music, murder, folklore--non-musical. The last seventy pages of the book are devoted to the general index, an alphabetical listing of song titles, key topics, collections, and archives.

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